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Encyclopaedia Natura Medica

The Grand Reference on Medicinal & Astral Virtues of Herbs & Minerals

Teresa Baldwin
Vincent Scalzo

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Encyclopaedia Natura Medica is a comprehensive account of Medicinal and Astrological values of Herbs and Minerals, picked up from various Therapeutic Traditions of the world and arranged into six parts over four volumes. It takes a detailed account of Dr. Nicholas Culpeper's study of European herbs and minerals and also lists about 3000 herbs found in different parts of world for their medicinal and astral importance. This Encyclopaedia is a valuable reference for everyone interested in holistic or natural medicine and combines updated information on herbs and minerals with the ancient knowledge.

The First part of the encyclopaedic compilation is named *An Introduction to Herbal Traditions* and discusses Herbs, Herbalism and Traditions in Herbal Medicine along with Herbs and Traditional Medicine in China.

Part Two describes more than 3500 Herbs and its medicinal components, dose preparation, administration and safety.

Part Three and four are brief yet most importantly have been exclusively devoted to Poisonous Herbs and Aroma Therapy.

Part five and six of the Natura Medica carry Nicholas Culpeper's Studies of the herbs and minerals, detailing their medicinal and astral importance in human life.
The last section briefs the reader about common methods for preparing powders, syrups, simples and compounds from herbs and minerals for the use of general physician. Lastly, we hope Natura Medica has succeeded in giving the a consolidated and useful information for a healthy and holistic life.

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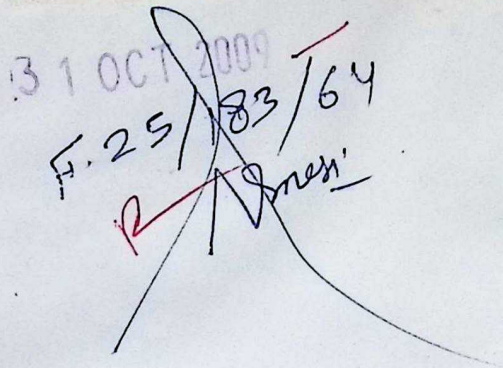

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Vol. I

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Editors :

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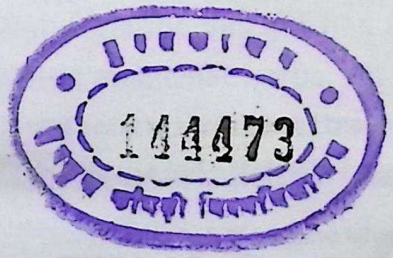
Vincent Scalzo



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ENCYCLOPAEDIA NATURÃ.MEDICA
THE GRAND REFERENCE ON MEDICINAL & ASTRAL VIRTUES OF HERBS & MINERALS
by TERESA BALDWIN, VINCENT SCALZO
[4 Volume Set]

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Our Editors

Teresa Baldwin is a medical herbalist living on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. She has an extensive background in orthomolecular nutrition and allergy therapy as well as clinical aromatherapy. After a year long journey embracing North America, China, Russia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, Teresa became deeply involved in the herbal renaissance that is underway in North America. She currently heads *The School of Herbal Studies*, Canada's respected centre of herbal education and regularly teaches in Canada, USA and New Zealand. She is also the author of *An Encyclopedia of Natural Healing for Children and Infants*.

A herbalist, botanical researcher **Vincent Scalzo** has co-authored several books with Teresa Baldwin including *Herbal Solutions for Healthy Living* and *Traditional Medicines from the Earth*. He also specializes in traditional Chinese medicine and Naturopathy. Vincent has a garden of his own where he cultivates medicinal herbs. An ardent practitioner of Yoga, he maintains and prepares many antique potions of Dr. Culpeper, many of which, he finds, have magical effect on health and well being.

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Preface

Traditions of Natural Medication and This Encyclopaedia

Encyclopaedia Natura Medica is a comprehensive account of Medicinal and Astrological values of Herbs and Minerals, picked up from various Therapeutic Traditions of the world and arranged into six parts over four volumes. The Encyclopaedia takes a detailed account of Dr. Nicholas Culpeper's study of European herbs and minerals and also lists about 3000 herbs found in different parts of world for their medicinal and astral importance.

Herbal medicine per se is a complementary therapy that uses plants or plant extracts to treat illness. There are numerous herbal products available that claim to treat a wide range of problems, from depression to colds and flu. Many well-established medicines come from plants. For example morphine comes from poppies, aspirin from willow bark, and digoxin (a treatment for an irregular heart beat) from foxgloves. Traditional herbal medicine is just one of the many different approaches to using plants as remedies. India has a great tradition of Ayurveda, where ancients have invented and used herbs having magical curative properties. Others include phytotherapy and Chinese herbal medicine. Traditional herbal medicine has been used in Britain for centuries and it remains popular, even in the era of scientific medicine and modern pharmaceuticals.

Different herbal systems of medicine use herbal remedies as a main part of treatment, including aromatherapy, Hindu Ayurvedic medicine and Chinese herbal medicine. Ayurvedic medicine is the traditional medicine of India and dates back to 2000 B.C. Herbal medicine forms just one part of the Ayurvedic system and is used—along with yoga, massage, diet and meditation—to balance the body and increase "prana", or life energy. Chinese herbal medicine works on the same principles as acupuncture—herbs are used to boost or disperse energy (qi). It is rare that a Chinese herbalist will prescribe just one herb. They are more likely to prescribe a complex cocktail of about ten different herbs. The UK Government has recently advised the public that the safety of Chinese herbs cannot be guaranteed.

Like many complementary therapies, herbal medicine aims to be holistic—it aims to treat the whole person, not just the symptoms, and to encourage the body to heal itself. Herbal practitioners believe that the delicate chemical balance of the whole herb is needed for greatest effect and to reduce potential side-effects. Different

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parts of the same plant, such as the flowers or seeds, can have very different actions. Herbal medicine is not about isolating the active ingredients from a plant which is the way that conventional medicines are often derived.

There are herbal medicines available that claim to treat almost any common complaint, but there is usually limited scientific evidence that these work. Some herbal treatments are more established, and have undergone some clinical testing. These include:

—St John's wort, for the treatment of mild to moderate depression,
—black cohosh, for menopausal symptoms,
—echinacea, to reduce the symptoms of colds,
—garlic, to reduce blood cholesterol levels and potentially lower the risk of heart disease,
—ginger, to relieve nausea and vomiting,
—ginkgo biloba, to improve mental performance in people with Alzheimer's disease,
—hawthorn berries, for mild heart failure,
—horse chestnut, for chronic venous insufficiency,
—saw palmetto, for enlarged prostate.

However, the herbal medicines that are not listed may also be effective. The evidence for these is conflicting and further studies are needed.

Although some herbal medicines, such as the ones listed above, may be helpful for certain problems, this does not necessarily mean they are safe in all situations. They should not be used during pregnancy. Like any medicine, herbal remedies can have side-effects and may interact with other drugs. There have even been reports of fatal toxic effects with some herbal products, although this is rare with products that originate in the UK. At present, most herbal products fall outside of the regulation of medicines, which means you can't be sure whether there is evidence that a herbal product works, what it contains and in what concentration, or whether it was manufactured properly. Planned legislation should introduce a system of recognising traditional herbal medicines, with new regulatory controls. In the cases of heart disease such as angina, high blood pressure or glaucoma, herbal treatments should not be taken without supervision from a trained herbalist or a doctor. There are also conditions that are not suitable for treatment by a herbalist, such as life-threatening illnesses, epilepsy or type 1 (insulin-dependent) diabetes.

A common-sense approach recognises that herbal remedies, including the few ones listed above, have been widely used for many years and may be useful for self-treating minor illnesses. However, natural does not mean harmless and care should be taken not to exceed the doses that are traditionally recommended. An associated

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risk is that by treating symptoms that are signals of a serious condition with herbal remedies, time is lost in giving tried and tested mainstream medicines.

Herbal remedies for self-treatment are available as tablets, capsules, ointments and creams, and are on sale in health food shops, pharmacies and even supermarkets. For more serious health complaints, you may want to see a trained herbalist. While not a state regulated profession (like nursing or medicine), members of the National Institute of Medical Herbalists (NIMH), have followed three to five years of structured study and can advise on the safety and suitability of herbs. It is particularly important to be cautious about taking herbs if you are pregnant or breast feeding. Consult a doctor and/or herbal practitioner, before making any changes in prescribed medications.

The Encyclopaedia Natura Medica is a valuable reference for everyone interested in holistic or natural medicine and combines updated information on herbs and minerals with the ancient knowledge. The First part of the encyclopaedic compilation is named **An Introduction to Herbal Traditions** and discusses **Herbs, Herbalism** and **Traditions in Herbal Medicine** along with Herbs and Traditional Medicine in China. Part Two **describes more than 3500 Herbs and its medicinal Components, dose preparation, administration and safety.** Part Three and four are brief yet most importantly have been exclusively devoted to Poisonous Herbs and Aroma Therapy.

Part five and six of the *Natura Medica* carry Nicholas Culpeper's Studies of the herbs and minerals, detailing their medicinal and astral importance in human life. The last section briefs the reader about common methods for preparing powders, syrups, simples and compounds from herbs and minerals for the use of general physician. Lastly, we hope *Natura Medica* has succeeded in giving the a consolidated and useful information for a healthy and holistic life.

—Teresa Baldwin

—Vincent Scalzo

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PART—One

Introduction to Herbal Traditions

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1. Herbs, Herbalism and Traditions in Herbal Medicine

Herbalism is a traditional medicinal or folk medicine practice based on the use of plants and plant extracts. Herbalism is also known as botanical medicine, medicinal botany, medical herbalism, herbal medicine, herbology, botanical medicine and phytotherapy. Sometimes the scope of herbal medicine is extended to include fungi and bee products, as well as minerals, shells and certain animal parts.

Many plants synthesize substances that are useful to the maintenance of health in humans and other animals. These include aromatic substances, most of which are phenols or their oxygen-substituted derivatives such as tannins. Many are secondary metabolites, of which at least 12,000 have been isolated, a number estimated to be less than 10% of the total.

In many cases, these substances (particularly the alkaloids) serve as plant defense mechanisms against predation by microorganisms, insects, and herbivores. Many of the herbs and spices used by humans to season food yield useful medicinal compounds.

With only a few exceptions, most herbal treatments have not been tested for safety and efficacy utilizing scientific studies or clinical trials. There is a concern in the scientific and medical communities that herbal treatments are used to replace well-studied and tested medical procedures thereby endangering the health of the patient.

Role of Herbal Medicine in Human Society

People in all continents have used hundreds to thousands of indigenous plants for treatment of ailments since prehistoric times. There is evidence from the Shanidar Cave in Iraq that suggests Neanderthals living 60,000 years used medicinal plants. A body that was unearthed there had been buried with eight species of plants which are still widely used in ethnomedicine around the world.

The first generally accepted use of plants as healing agents was depicted in the cave paintings discovered in the Lascaux caves in France, which have been radiocarbon-dated to between 13,000–25,000 BCE. Medicinal herbs were found in the personal effects of an "Ice man," whose body was frozen in the Swiss Alps for more than 5300 years which appear to have been used to treat the parasites found in his intestines.

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Anthropologists theorize that over time, and with insight, instinct and trial and error, a base of knowledge would have been acquired within early tribal communities. As this knowledge base expanded over the generations, the specialized role of the herbalist emerged. The process would likely have occurred in varying manners within a wide diversity of cultures.

Indigenous healers often claim to have learned by observing that sick animals change their food preferences to nibble at bitter herbs they would normally reject. Field biologists have provided corroborating evidence based on observation of diverse species such as chimpanzees, chickens, sheep and butterflies.

Lowland gorillas take 90% of their diet from the fruits of Aframomum melegueta, a relative of the ginger plant, that is a potent antimicrobial and apparently keeps Shigellosis and similar infections at bay.

Researchers from Ohio Wesleyan University found that some birds select nesting material rich in antimicrobial agents which protect their young from harmful bacteria. Sick animals tend to forage plants rich in secondary metabolites such as tannins and alkaloids. Since these phytochemicals often have antiviral, antibacterial, antifungal and antihelminthic properties, a plausible case can be made for self-medication by animals in the wild.

Some animals have digestive systems especially adapted to cope with certain plant toxins. For example, the koala can live on the leaves and shoots of the eucalyptus, a plant that is dangerous to most animals. A plant that is harmless to a particular animal may not be safe for humans to ingest. A reasonable conjecture is that these discoveries were traditionally collected by the medicine people of indigenous tribes, who then passed on safety information and cautions.

The use of herbs to treat disease is almost universal among non-industrialized societies. A number of traditions came to dominate the practice of herbal medicine at the end of the twentieth century:

- The herbal medicine system, based on Greek and Roman sources
- The Ayurvedic medicine system from India, and
- Chinese herbal medicine (Chinese herbology)
- Unani-Tibb medicine
- Shamanic Herbalism

Many of the pharmaceuticals currently available to physicians have a long history of use as herbal remedies, including opium, aspirin, digitalis, and quinine. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 80 percent of the world's population presently uses herbal medicine for some aspect of primary health care.

Herbal medicine is a major component in all traditional medicine systems and a common element in Ayurvedic, homeopathic, naturopathic, traditional Chinese medicine, and Native American medicine. According to the WHO, 74% of 119 modern plant-derived pharmaceutical

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medicines are used in ways that are similar to their traditional uses. Major pharmaceutical companies are currently conducting extensive research on plant materials gathered from the rainforests and other places for possible new pharmaceuticals.

The use of and search for drugs and dietary supplements derived from plants have accelerated in recent years. Pharmacologists, microbiologists, botanists, and natural-products chemists are combing the Earth for phytochemicals and leads that could be developed for treatment of various diseases. In fact, approximately 25% of modern drugs used in the United States have been derived from plants.

- Three quarters of plants that provide active ingredients for prescription drugs came to the attention of researchers because of their use in traditional medicine.
- Among the 120 active compounds currently isolated from the higher plants and widely used in modern medicine today, 75 percent show a positive correlation between their modern therapeutic use and the traditional use of the plants from which they are derived.
- More than two thirds of the world's plant species—at least 35,000 of which are estimated to have medicinal value—come from the developing countries.
- At least 7,000 medical compounds in the modern pharmacopoeia are derived from plants

Biological Background

All plants produce chemical compounds as part of their normal metabolic activities. These can be split into primary metabolites, such as sugars and fats, found in all plants, and secondary metabolites found in a smaller range of plants, some useful ones found only in a particular genus or species.

The functions of secondary metabolites are varied. For example, some secondary metabolites are toxins used to deter predation, and others are pheremones used to attract insects for pollination. It is these secondary metabolites which can have therapeutic actions in humans and which can be refined to produce drugs.

The word drug itself comes from the Swedish word "druug", which means 'dried plant'. Some examples are inulin from the roots of dahlias, quinine from the cinchona, morphine and codeine from the poppy, and digoxin from the foxglove.

The active ingredient in Willow bark, once prescribed by Hippocrates, is salacin, or salicylic acid. The discovery of salicylic acid lead to the development of "aspirin", also known as "acetylsalicylic acid". "Aspirin" was originally a brand name, and is still a protected trademark in some countries. This medication was patented by Bayer AG.

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POPULARITY

A survey released in May 2004 by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine focused on who used complementary and alternative medicines (CAM), what was used, and why it was used. The survey was limited to adults, aged 18 years and over during 2002, living in the United States. According to this survey, herbal therapy, or use of natural products other than vitamins and minerals, was the most commonly used CAM therapy (18.9%) when all use of prayer was excluded.

Herbal remedies are very common in Europe. In Germany, herbal medications are dispensed by apothecaries (*i.e.*, Apotheke). Prescription drugs are sold alongside essential oils, herbal extracts, or herbal teas. Herbal remedies are seen by some as a treatment to be preferred to chemical medications which have been industrially produced.

In the United Kingdom, the training of medical herbalists is done by private colleges. For example, Bachelor of Science degrees in herbal medicine are offered at Universities such as University of East London, Middlesex University, of Central Lancashire, University of Westminster, University of Lincoln and Napier University in Edinburgh at the present.

TYPES OF HERBAL MEDICINE SYSTEMS

Medicinal plants can be used by anyone, for example as part of a salad, an herbal tea or supplement, although the sale of some herbs considered dangerous is often restricted to the public. Sometimes such herbs are provided to professional herbalists by specialist companies. Many herbalists, both professional and amateur, often grow or "wildcraft" their own herbs. Many common weeds have medicinal properties (such as the dandelion, for example).

In Chinese medicine herbs (which may include animal and mineral parts) are divided into "Superior" (food grade), "Moderate" (to be taken for disease for a short time) and "Inferior" (toxic, short term) grades. Herbal formulas are based upon the organ system which is out of balance, with chief herbs addressing the main complaint, deputy herbs which reinforce the actions of the chief or address other affected organ systems, and servants which may harmonize, balance temperatures or tastes of the herbs, direct them to various parts of the body or assist penetration. Herbal formulas tend to have five to 15 herbs.

Eclectic medicine came out of the vitalist tradition, similar to physiomedicalism and bridged the European and Native American traditions. Cherokee medicine tends to divide herbs into foods, medicines and toxins and to use seven plants in the treatment of disease, which is defined with both spiritual and physiological aspects, according to Cherokee herbalist David Winston.

Auyrvedic medicine has quite complex formulas with 30 or more ingredients, including a sizable number of ingredients that have undergone "alchemical processing", chosen to balance "Vata", "Pitta" or "Kapha." In addition there are more modern theories of herbal combination like William LeSassier's triune formula which combined Pythagorean imagery with Chinese

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medicine ideas and resulted in 9 herb formulas which supplemented, drained or neutrally nourished the main organ systems affected and three associated systems. His system has been taught to thousands of influential American herbalists through his own apprenticeship programs during his lifetime, the William LeSassier Archive and the David Winston Center for Herbal Studies

Ayurvedic medicine is an ancient system of health care that is native to the Indian subcontinent. It is presently in daily use by millions of people in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and indirectly through it being the major influence on Unani, Chinese and Tibetan Medicine, in China, Tibet, and Pakistan too. The word "Ayurveda" is a tatpurusha compound of the word āyus meaning "life" or "life principle", and the word veda, which refers to a system of "knowledge". Thus "Ayurveda" roughly translates as the "knowledge of life". According to Charaka Samhita, "life" itself is defined as the "combination of the body, sense organs, mind and soul, the factor responsible for preventing decay and death, which sustains the body over time, and guides the processes of rebirth".

According to this perspective, Ayurveda is concerned with measures to protect "ayus", which includes healthy living along with therapeutic measures that relate to physical, mental, social and spiritual harmony. Ayurveda is also one among the few traditional systems of medicine to contain a sophisticated system of surgery (which is referred to as "salya-chikitsa").

According to the Ayurvedavatarana (the "descent of Ayurveda"), the origin of Ayurveda is stated to be a divine revelation of the ancient Indian creator God Lord Brahma. as he awoke to recreate the universe. This knowledge was passed directly to Daksha Prajapati in the form of shloka sung by Lord Brahma, and this was in turn passed down through a successive chain of deities to Lord Indra, the protector of dharma. According to this account, the first human exponent of Ayurveda was Bharadvaja, who learned it directly from Indra. Bharadvaja in turn taught Ayurveda to a group of assembled sages, who then passed down different aspects of this knowledge to their students. According to tradition, Ayurveda was first described in text form by Agnivesha, in his book the Agnivesh tantra.

The book was later redacted by Charaka, and became known as the Charaka Samhitā. Another early text of Ayurveda is the Sushruta Samhitā, which was compiled by Sushrut, the primary pupil of Dhanvantri, sometime around 1000 B.C.E. Dhanvantri is known as the Father of Surgery, and in the Sushrut Samhita, the teachings and surgical techniques of Dhanvantri are compiled and complemented with additional findings and observations of Sushrut regarding topics ranging from obstetrics and orthopedics to ophthalmology. Sushrut Samhita together with Charaka Samhitā, served as the textual material within the ancient Universities of Takshashila and Nalanda.

These texts are believed to have been written around the beginning of the Common Era, and is based on a holistic approach rooted in the philosophy of the Vedas and Vedic culture.

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The History

Hinduism believes in the divine origin of Ayurveda. Nagarjuna, a follower of Buddha, was a well known herbologist, known for inventing various new drugs for the treatment of ailments. Documented references to the precise timing of the origins of Ayurveda are not available. The age of Ayurveda has been established on the basis of correlating the evidence with other disciplines as well as circumstantial evidence. Ayurveda is said to have been first compiled as a text by Agnivesha, in his book Agnivesh tantra, which was written during Vedic times. The book was later revised by Charaka, and renamed to Charaka Samhitā (encyclopedia of the physician Charaka). Other early texts of Ayurveda include the Charaka Samhitā and the Sushruta Samhitā The system was orally transferred via the Gurukul system until a script came into existence.

The earliest scripts would have been written on perishable materials such as Taalpatra and Bhojapatra, which could not be readily preserved. The script was later written on stone and copper sheets. Verses dealing with Ayurveda are included in the Atharvaveda, which implies that some form of Ayurveda is as old as the Vedas. Ayurvedic practices have also evolved over time, and some practices may be considered innovations upon earlier Vedic practices, such as the advances made during the Buddhist period in India.

Hinduism attributes the genesis of Ayurveda to several theories in which the knowledge is believed to have been passed on from being to being, initially, through its realization by the divine sages, and gradually into the human sphere by a complex system of mnemonics. Details of Ayurvedic traditions vary between writers, as is expected when oral traditions are transcribed from multiple sources. The earliest authors of Ayurvedic manuscripts recorded divergent forms of the tradition.

Development

Ayurvedic practice was flourishing during the time of Buddha (around 520 B.C.) , and in this period the Ayurvedic practitioners were commonly using Mercuric-sulphur combination based medicines. In this period mercury, sulphur and other metals were used in conjunction with herbs to prepare the different medications. An important Ayurvedic practitioner of this period was Nagarjuna, a Buddhist herbologist, famous for inventing various new drugs for the treatment of ailments. Nagarjuna was accompanied by Surananda, Nagbodhi, Yashodhana, Nityanatha, Govinda, Anantdev, Vagbhatta etc. The knowledge of Ayurveda progressed a lot during this period, including development of newer and more effective medicines, and is therefore termed as the Golden Period of Ayurveda.

After emerging victorious at the Kalinga War, Emperor Ashoka (304 B.C.–232 B.C.) influenced by the Buddhist teachings, banned any bloodshed in his kingdom in 250 B.C. Therefore many Ayurveda practitioners, who were practicing surgery along with medicine, left the surgical intervention and adopted totally new medicinal treatments. In this period, Ayurveda again evolved and flourished with the invention of new drugs, new methodology

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and new innovations. The practice of the accompanying surgery slowly died out during this period. During the regime of Chandragupta Maurya (375–415 A.D.), Ayurveda was part of mainstream Indian medical techniques, and continued to be so until the invasion of the English.

Chakrapani Dutta (DuttaSharma) was a Vaid Brahman of Bengal who wrote books on Ayurveda such as "Chakradutta" and others. Chakrapani Dutta was the Rajavaidya of Great King Laxman Sen {some says rajVaid of King Nayapala (1038–1055)}. It is believed by some practitioners that Chakradutta is the essence of Ayurveda.

Ayurveda has always been preserved by the people of India as a traditional "science of life", despite increasing adoption of European medical techniques during the time of British rule. For several decades the reputation and skills of the various Ayurvedic schools declined markedly as Western medicine and Western-style hospitals were built. However, beginning in the 1970s, a gradual recognition of value of Ayurveda returned, and today Ayurvedic hospitals and practitioners are flourishing throughout all of India. As well, the production and marketing of Ayurvedic herbal medicines has dramatically increased, as well as scientific documentation of benefits. Today, Ayurvedic medicines are available throughout the world.

Gurukul System of Ayurveda

In the earlier days of its conception, the system of Ayurvedic medicine was orally transferred *via*. the Gurukul system until a written script came into existence.

In this system, the Guru gave a solemn address where he directed the students to a life of chastity, honesty, and vegetarianism. The student was to strive with all his being to heal the sick. He was not to betray patients for his own advantage. He was required to dress modestly and avoid alcohol or drugs. He was to be collected and self-controlled, measured in speech at all times. He was to constantly improve his knowledge and technical skill. At the patient's home, he was to be courteous and modest, directing all attention to the patient's welfare. He was not to divulge any knowledge about the patient and his family. If the patient was incurable, he was to keep this to himself if it was likely to harm the patient or others.

The normal length of the student's training appears to have been seven years. Before graduation, the student was to pass a test. But the physician was to continue to learn through texts, direct observation (pratyaksha), and through inference (anumāna). In addition, the vaidyas attended meetings where knowledge was exchanged. The practitioners also gained knowledge of unusual remedies from lay people who were outside the Ayurvedic community such as hillsmen, herdsmen, and forest-dwellers.

Traditions of Ayurveda

Three traditions of Ayurveda exist today—two of them based on the compendia of Charka and Sushruta Samhitās, and a third tradition known as Kāshyapas. However, Ayurvedic remedies prior to these traditions also exist, as mentioned in the earlier Vedic

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literature (2nd millennium B.C.). Both the Sushruta and the Charaka Samhitās are the product of several scholars, having been revised and supplemented over a period of several hundred years. The scholar Vāgbhata, who lived in Sindh at the beginning of the 7th century A.D., wrote a synthesis of earlier Ayurvedic materials in a collection of verses called the Ashtānga Hridayam. Another work associated with the same author, the Ashtānga Samgraha, contains much of the same material in a more diffuse form, written in a mixture of prose and verse. The relationship between these two works, and a third intermediate compilation, is still a topic of active research. The works of Charaka, Sushruta, and Vāgbhata are considered canonical and reverentially called the Vriddha Trayi, "The Triad of Ancients"; or Brhat Trayi, "The Greater Triad." In the early 8th century, Mādhav wrote his Nidāna, a work on etiology, which soon assumed a position of authority.

Post Brhat Trayi Period

The Brhat Trayi (literally "the three great compositions") is a classic Ayurvedic literary work, which was composed, compiled, and edited by Vagbhatta II, under the title Ashtānga Samgraha. At one time, it was believed that those who read and fully understood the contents of Vriddha Trayi and the Brhat Trayi, were good practitioners of Ayurveda. Legends concerning the origins of the text refer to the Ayurvedic practitioner Vāgbhata who lived during the time of the epic Mahabharata and was the chief physician of king Yudhisthir. Most believe that the author of the Ashtānga Samgraha was born before 200 A.D. and is properly known as Vāgbhata the 1st. Another man named Vāgbhata (who was born about 100 B.C.) recomposed the text, including the writings of Charaka, Sushruta under a new title Astang Hridaya.

Mythology also refers to another Ayurvedic physician known as Vangsen. Myths place him in ancient Bengal where he wrote a classic Ayurvedic book, simply called Vangsen. The book is written in easy and understandable language and adds many new chapters to the previous texts.

After Vangsen, a scholar by the name of Madhavacharya composed the book, Madhav Nidan. He is thought to have been the prime minister for the Emperor of Vijaynagara. Madhav Nidan is widely considered the best Ayurvedic book for the diagnosis of some diseases known during that period.

After Madhav Nidan, the next in line of famous Ayurvedic books Bhav Prakash was written during the time that the Portuguese first came to India in 1498 by a man named Bhav Mishra of Madras. The period in which he wrote can be pinpointed accurately because in the Bhav Prakash, he described the symptoms of a disease called "Firang" (Gonorrhoea and Syphilis), which was introduced to the subcontinent through contact with Europeans. ("Firangi" was a Persian-derived pejorative for Europeans in India, who brought the diseases with them). Bhav Mishra's other contribution to Ayurvedic medicine was the introduction of pulse examination/pulse diagnosis. Many writers after Bhav Mishra contributed to Ayurvedic literature. Among them Sharangdhar, Chakra Dutta, Vaidya Vinod, Vaidya Vamanotsava,

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Bhaisajya Ratnawali, and the Lolimb Raj, who wrote the Vaidya Jeevan in verse form. The first lines of the verses of the Vaidya Jeevan are addressed to the author's "beloved", while the rest of the verse has contains information about curing diseases.

About 200 years ago, Pranacharya Shri Sadanand Sharma wrote the Ras Tarangini, which was the "base book" for modernizing Ayurveda practices. In this book, advances in chemistry are included. The book describes the use of many chemical substances as medicine and their successful uses. Upon considering the advice of this book, Ayurvedic practitioners began to process the traditional herbs in sulphate, nitrate, muriate, phosphate and nitromuriate forms. Sarpagandha [Latin: Rauwolfia Serpentina] Muriate, Sarpagandha Sulphate, Sarpagandha Phosphate, Sarpagandha Nitrate, Sarpagandha nitromuriate and many others have been prepared and tested on patients. The Ras Tarangini mentions "Shankhadrav", which is a medicine used internally and externally in many disease conditions. Shankhadrav-based herbal medicine, invented by an Indian physician, is regarded by the National Innovation Foundation, Ahmedabad, India.

Tridosha System

The central concept of Ayurvedic medicine is the theory that health exists when there is a balance between three fundamental bodily substances or doshas called Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

- Vata is the air principle necessary to mobilize the function of the nervous system
- Pitta is the fire principle which uses bile to direct digestion and hence metabolism into the venous system.
- Kapha is the water principle which relates to mucous, lubrication and the carrier of nutrients into the arterial system.

All Ayurvedic physicians believe that these ancient ideas, based in the spiritual knowledge discovered by the Rishis and Munis, exist in harmony with physical reality. These Ayurvedic concepts allow physicians to examine the homeostasis of the whole system.

People may be of a predominant dosha or constitution, but all doshas have the basic elements within them.

Ayurvedic Tastes

Ayurveda holds that the tastes of foods or herbs have specific physiological effects. Those tastes that transform after digestion (Vipaka) are more powerful.

Sweet - Madhura

—Sweet foods nourish, cool, moisten, oil, and increase weight

Sour - Amla

—Sour foods warm, oil, and increase weight

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Salty - Lavan

—Salty foods warm, dissolve, stimulate, soften, oil, and increase weight

Pungent - Katu

—Pungent foods warm, dry, stimulate, and decrease weight

Bitter - Tikta

—Bitter foods cool, dry, purify and decrease weight

Astringent - Kasaya

—Astringent foods cool, dry, reduce stickiness.

Medications

Ayurvedic practitioners believe that the tulsi (holy basil) plant has medicinal qualities

Ayurveda operates on the precept that various materials of vegetable, animal, and mineral origin have some medicinal value. The medicinal properties of these materials have been documented by the practitioners and have been used for centuries to cure illness and/or help maintain good health. Ayurvedic medicaments are made from herbs or mixtures of herbs, either alone or in combination with minerals, metals and other ingredients of animal origin. The metals, animals and minerals are purified by individual processes before being used for medicinal purposes.

Writers and compilers of Ayurvedic literature such as Charaka, Sushruta, Vagabhatta, Bhav Mishra, Shaligram and others have written about the qualities, characteristics and medicinal uses of the herbs, mineral, metals, chemicals, animal parts, cooked food articles, natural foods, fruits etc. Among them, the Bhav Prakash Nighantu, written by Bhav Mishra, is known for its detail. The composition of the Nighantu part (Ayurvedic Materia Medica) of the Bhav Prakash is part of the classical book. The details of the medicinal herbs are given according to the nature, effects, and curative properties as observed by the Ayurvedic practitioners.

Ayurvedic literature has been written by several authors in languages such as Sanskrit, Hindi, Tamil and more recently, in English. The Shaligram Nighantu was written in Sanskrit. The Banaushadhi Chandrodaya was written in Hindi. The Indian Materia Medica was written in English.

Panchakarma and Ayurvedic Massage

Panchakarma (the five actions or modalities) is a collection of purification techniques that Ayurveda prescribes for some diseases and for periodic cleansing. A course of Pancharkarma typically includes a short-term dietary prescription, massage, herbs, and may include purgatives, sweat baths, medicated enemas, and nasal cleansing. Ayurvedic massage is a form of treatment for various age related and other common disorders. Some of the advantages which can be cited are pain relief, improved circulation, stress relief, better sleep, flexibility,

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athletic performance and emotional benefits. Massage therapy can soothe pain, relax stiff muscles, and reduce the swelling that accompanies arthritis. Advocates claim that, with ayurvedic massage, deep-seated toxins in the joints and tissues are loosened and released into the system for elimination through natural toxin-release processes.

Current Status

In the early 20th century, Ayurvedic physicians began to organize into professional associations and to promote their case for national recognition and funding. This began to become a reality after Indian Independence in 1947.

Ayurveda is now a statutory, recognised medical system of health care like other medical systems existed in India. The Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) governs and recommends policies for the research and development of the system. An Encyclopedia on Ayurveda has been developed to promote the knowledge of Ayurveda worldwide.

In certain states in India, Charak Samhita and Sushruta Samhita are included in the curriculum of modern medical courses (M.B.B.S).

Ayurvedic Institutions and Practitioners

Ayurvedic practitioners have been appointed as Honorary Ayurvedic Physician to the President of India. Every year on the occasion of Dhanvantari jayanti, a prestigious Dhanvantari Award is conferred on a famous personality of Medical Sciences including Ayurveda. Today, Besides Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharastra, Kerala also is one of the leading states in India that promotes research and practices of Ayurveda. This has been attributed to its well established Ayurveda centers and Ayurveda pharmaceutical companies, as also the presence of medicinal herbs and plants on the Western Ghats mountain range that runs through the state. There are many Ayurvedic centers (known as Vaidya shalas) all over Kerala.

Practice in The West

As a result of strong regulations in medical practice in Europe and America, the most commonly practiced Ayurvedic treatments in the west are massage and dietary and herbal advice.

In the United States, the National Institute of Ayurvedic Medicine (established by Scott Gerson) is an example of a research institute that has carried out research into Ayurvedic practices. Gerson has published part of his work on the antifungal activities of certain Ayurvedic plants in medical journals. Several Pharmecutical companies and Academic Institutions in the west have come into conflict with Indian academic institutions and traditional Ayurvedic practitioners over the intellectual property rights of herbal products researched by the western agencies. The Ayurvedic practitioners have known about the efficacy of such products for centuries and so contend that they carry precedence with regards to patent rights on such products.

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On December 1993, the University of Mississippi Medical Center had a patent issued to them by U.S. patents and trademarks office on the use of turmeric (U.S. patent No. 5,401,504) for healing. The patent was contested by India's industrial research organization, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (C.S.I.R.), on the grounds that traditional Ayurvedic practitioners were already aware of the healing properties of the substance and have been for centuries, making this patent a case of bio-piracy.

After a complex legal battle, the U.S. Patents and Trademarks Office ruled on August 14, 1997 that the patent was invalid because it was not a novel invention, giving the intellectual property rights to the principle back to the traditional practitioners of Ayurveda. R. A. Mashelkar, director-general of the CSIR, was satisfied with the result, saying: "This success will enhance the confidence of the people and help remove fears about India's helplessness on preventing bio-piracy and appropriation of inventions based on traditional knowledge"

The turmeric patent was just one of the hundreds that the several academic organizations and Pharmecutical companies in the west have claimed by ignoring Ayurvedic knowledge. Vandana Shiva, a global campaigner for a fair and honest Intellectual Property Rights system, says patents on herbal products derived from Neem, Amla, Jar Amla, Anar, Salai, Dudhi, Gulmendhi, Bagbherenda, Karela, Erand, Rangoon-kibel, Vilayetishisham and Chamkura also need to be revoked.

Seven American and four Japanese firms have filed for grant of patents on formulations containing extracts of the herb Ashwagandha. Fruits, leaves and seeds of the Indian medicinal plant withania somnifera have been traditionally used for the Ayurvedic system as aphrodisiacs, diuretics and for treating memory loss. The Japanese patent applications are related to the use of the herb as a skin ointment and for promoting reproductive fertility. The U.S. based company Natreon has also obtained a patent for an Ashwagandha extract. Another U.S. establishment, the New England Deaconess Hospital, has taken a patent on an Ashwagandha formulation claimed to alleviate symptoms associated with arthritis. It is clear that the Ashwagandha plant is catching the attention of scientists and more patents related to Ashwagandha are being filed or granted by different patent offices since 1996.

Scientific Criticism of Ayurveda

Critics object to the lack of rigorous scientific studies and clinical trials of many ayurvedic products (although see Research and innovations in Ayurveda for details of the evidence which is available). The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine states that "most clinical trials of Ayurvedic approaches have been small, had problems with research designs, lacked appropriate control groups, or had other issues that affected how meaningful the results were." In India, scientific research in Ayurveda is largely undertaken by the statutory body of the Central Government, the Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha (CCRAS), through a national network of research institutes. A large number of non-governmental organisations are also conducting research work on different aspects of

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Ayurveda. However, "even staunch advocates of Ayurveda like cardiologist Dr. M.S. Valiathan . . . admit that 'clinical studies that would satisfy the liberal criteria of WHO World Health Organisation have been alarmingly few from India, in spite of patients crowding in Ayurvedic hospitals'".

There is evidence that using some ayurvedic medicine, especially those involving herbs, metals, minerals, or other materials involves potentially serious risks, including toxicity.

A research study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found significant levels of toxic heavy metals such as lead, mercury and arsenic in 20% of Ayurvedic preparations that were made in South Asia for sale in America. The Journal found that, if taken according to the manufacturers' instructions, this 20% of remedies "could result in heavy metal intakes above published regulatory standards" Similar studies have been performed in India, and have confirmed these results. In response to the study, some practitioners of Ayurveda claimed that "heavy metals are integral to some formulations and have been used for centuries. There is no point of doing trials as they have been used safely and have mention in our ancient texts." In fact western medicine also contains toxic ingredients, also dosed at low levels to fight disease.

There is a technique of detoxification applied to heavy metals and toxic herbs called samskaras, which is similar to the Chinese pao zhi although the Ayurvedic technique is more complex and may involve prayers as well as physical pharmacy techniques. An intriguing study of the effectiveness of the Ayurvedic samskaras was printed in the Journal of Postgrad Medicine:

Crude aconite is an extremely lethal substance. However, the science of Ayurveda looks upon aconite as a therapeutic entity. Crude aconite is always processed *i.e.*, it undergoes 'samskaras' before being utilised in the Ayurvedic formulations. This study was undertaken in mice, to ascertain whether 'processed' aconite is less toxic as compared to the crude or unprocessed one. It was seen that crude aconite was significantly toxic to mice (100% mortality at a dose of 2.6 mg/mouse) whereas the fully processed aconite was absolutely non-toxic (no mortality at a dose even 8 times as high as that of crude aconite). Further, all the steps in the processing were essential for complete detoxification

NATUROPATHIC MEDICINES

Naturopathic medicine (also known as naturopathy) is a school of medical philosophy and practice that seeks to improve health and treat disease chiefly by assisting the body's innate capacity to recover from illness and injury. Naturopathic practice may include a broad array of different modalities, including manual therapy, hydrotherapy, herbalism, acupuncture, counseling, environmental medicine, aromatherapy, nutritional counseling, homeopathy, and so on. Practitioners tend to emphasize a holistic approach to patient care. Naturopathy has its origins in India along with Ayurveda, but is today practiced in many countries around the world in one form or another, where it is subject to different standards of regulation and

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levels of acceptance. Naturopathic practitioners prefer not to use invasive surgery, or most synthetic drugs, preferring "natural" remedies, for instance relatively unprocessed or whole medications, such as herbs and foods. Licensed physicians from accredited schools are trained to use diagnostic tests such as imaging and blood tests before deciding upon the full course of treatment. Naturopathic Practitioners also employ the use of prescription medications and surgery when necessary and refer out to other medical practitioners.

The Principles of Naturopathic Medicine

Naturopathy is based on six tenets or principles:

"First do no harm"

The process of healing includes the manifestations of symptoms, so that any therapy that interferes with this natural healing process by masking symptoms is considered suppressive and should be avoided (primum non nocere).

"The healing power of nature"

The healing power of nature (vis medicatrix naturae), has two aspects: first that the body has the ability to heal itself and it is the naturopathic doctor's role to facilitate this natural process, and second that nature heals. Following this principle includes getting enough sleep, exercising, feeding the body nutritional food and, if needed, additional earth food, such as herbs, or algae, which is a living organism. It is asserted, yet strongly refuted by critics, that plants can gently move the body into health without side effects posed by some synthetic chemicals in modern pharmaceuticals.

"Identify and treat the cause"

The underlying root causes of disease must be removed for complete healing to take place (tolle causam). These root causes can exist at many levels: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. It is the naturopathic doctor's ostensible role to identify this root cause, in addition to alleviate suffering by treating symptoms.

"Treat the whole person"

A core tenet of naturopathy is the belief that health must go beyond treatment of immediate symptoms, and instead treat the entire person's well being. That means treating the entire body, as well as the spirit/soul and mind. This approach is usually called the wholistic or holistic method.

"The physician as teacher"

It is the role of the naturopath to educate an individual in their practices and encourage that individual to "take responsibility for their own health" (docere). This cooperative relationship between doctor and patient is essential to healing.

"Prevention"

The ultimate goal of the naturopathic physician is prevention. The emphasis is on building

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health, not fighting illness. This is done by fostering healthy lifestyles, healthy beliefs, and healthy relationships.

History of Naturopathic Medicine

The term naturopathy was coined before 1900, by John Scheel, and used by Benedict Lust. Lust had been schooled in hydrotherapy and other natural health practices in Germany by Father Sebastian Kneipp, who sent Lust to the United States to bring them Kneipp's methods. In 1905, Lust founded the American School of Naturopathy in New York, the first naturopathic college in the United States but "according to the New York Department of State, and the Florida Report to Governor Leroy Collins, it appears that this naturopathic school was never anything but a diploma mill". Lust took great strides in promoting the profession, culminating in passage of licensing laws in several states prior to 1935, including Arizona, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington and the founding of several naturopathic colleges.

Naturopathic medicine went into decline, along with most other natural health professions, after the 1930s, with the discovery of penicillin and advent of synthetic drugs such as antibiotics and corticosteroids. In the post-war era, Lust's death, conflict between various schools of natural medicine (homeopathy, eclectics, physio-medicalism, herbalism, naturopathy, etc.), the rise of medical technology, and consolidation of political power in conventional medicine were all contributing factors. In 1910, when the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published the Flexner Report which criticized many aspects of medical education in various institutions (natural and conventional), it was mostly seen as an attack on low-quality natural medicine education. It caused many such programs to shut down and contributed to the popularity of conventional medicine.

Naturopathic medicine never completely ceased to exist, however, as there were always a few states in which licensing laws existed—though at one point there were virtually no schools. One of the most visible steps towards the profession's modern renewal was the opening in 1956 of the National College of Naturopathic Medicine in Portland, Oregon. This was the first of the modern naturopathic medical schools offering four-year naturopathic medical training with the intention of integrating mainstream science and naturopathic principles and practice.

Naturopathy in India

Naturopathy is very popular in India, and there are numerous naturopathy hospitals in the country. There are also many doctors trained in the Western system of medicine who have acquired naturopathy degrees so as to integrate the insights gained into their system of practice. The Indian stream of naturopathy differs from the Western stream in many ways, particularly in their emphasis of strict vegetarianism and yoga.

Today, Naturopathy is quickly growing in popularity and accepted use.

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NATUROPATHIC PHYSICIANS & TRADITIONAL NATUROPATHS

There are two groups in North America calling themselves "naturopaths" who have recently been engaged in legal battles. The term when originally coined by John Scheel, and popularized by Dr. Benedict Lust (a German name pronounced "loost") was to apply to those receiving an education in the basic medical sciences with an emphasis on natural therapies. This usage best describes modern day naturopathic physicians. In the absence of universal regulation of naturopathy, another group of practitioners (the so-called 'traditional naturopaths') has emerged.

- Naturopathic Physicians are formally educated at an accredited school, board-licensed, and are exclusively designated ND or NMD in jurisdictions where these titles are protected.
- Traditional naturopaths have no standardised education, are not board-licensed, may sometimes use the title DNM, but sometimes claim the ND designation in jurisdictions where titles are not protected.

Naturopathic Physicians

Naturopathic physicians in North America are primary care providers trained in conventional medical sciences, diagnosis and treatment, and are experts in natural therapeutics. Licensing and training requirements vary from state to state, but at least 14 states, the District of Columbia, and four Canadian provinces have formal licensing and educational requirements. In these jurisdictions, Naturopathic Physicians must pass comprehensive board exams set by the North American Board of Naturopathic Examiners (NABNE) after having completed training at a college certified by the Council on Naturopathic Medical Eductaion (CNME).

Traditional Naturopaths and Regulation of Naturopathic Physicians

Traditional naturopaths are guided by the same naturopathic philosophies and principles as board-licensed Naturopathic physicians and often prescribe similar treatments but do so as alternative or complimentary practitioners rather than as primary care providers. Some may voluntarily join a professional organization, but these organizations do not acredit educational programs in any meaningful way or license practitioners per se. The training programs for traditional naturopaths can vary greatly, are less rigorous and do not provide the same basic and clinical science education as naturopathic medical schools do. The professional organizations formed by traditional naturopaths are not recognized by the U.S. Government or any U.S. State or Territory. In some jurisdictions the practice of naturopathic medicine is unregulated and so the titles like "naturopath", "naturopathic doctor", and "doctor of natural medicine" are not protected by law. This may lead to difficulty in ensuring that a practitioner is trained to a particular standard or has adequate liability insurance.

The industry is self regulated in Australia. There is no protection of title, meaning that technically anyone can practise as a naturopath. The only way to obtain insurance for professional indemnity or public liability is by joining a professional association, which can only be achieved having completed an accredited course and gaining professional certification.

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It is generally thought that with registration, a minimum four-year degree with a minimum 400 hours of supervised clinic practice will be required for practice. Currently only a few institutions fulfil these requirements, including the Australian College of Natural Medicine's degree course, Southern Cross University Bachelor degree, and the University of Western Sydney's combined Bachelor of Applied Science (Naturopathic Studies) and Graduate Diploma in Naturopathy.

Currently the only registered modalities of natural medicine in Australia are those relating to Chinese medicine, and only in the state of Victoria. However the Victorian Government is currently reviewing this, and is looking to allow the registration of naturopaths along with homoeopaths and Western herbal medicine practioners.

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2. An Introduction to Herbs and Traditional Medicine in China

Traditional Chinese medicine (also known as TCM) is a range of traditional medical practices originating in China that developed over several thousand years. The English phrase "TCM" was created in the 1950s by the PRC in order to export Chinese medicine; there is no equivalent phrase in Chinese (zhongyi xue translates literally as simply "Chinese medicine studies"). In fact, TCM is a modern compilation of traditional Chinese medicine. TCM practices include theories, diagnosis and treatments such as herbal medicine, acupuncture and massage; often Qigong is also strongly affiliated with TCM.

TCM is a form of so-called Oriental medicine, which includes other traditional East Asian medical systems such as traditional Japanese, and Korean medicine.

TCM theory asserts that processes of the human body are interrelated and in constant interaction with the environment. Signs of disharmony help the TCM practitioner to understand, treat and prevent illness and disease.

TCM theory is based on a number of philosophical frameworks including the theory of Yin-yang, the Five Elements, the human body Meridian system, Zang Fu organ theory, and others. Diagnosis and treatment are conducted with reference to these concepts.

TCM does not operate within a western scientific paradigm but some practitioners make efforts to bring practices into a biomedical and evidence-based medicine framework.

TCM and CCM History

Much of the philosophy of traditional Chinese medicine derived from the same philosophical bases that contributed to the development of Taoist philosophy, and reflects the classical Chinese belief that individual human experiences express causative principles effective in the environment at all scales.

During the golden age of his reign from 2698 to 2596 B.C. as a result of a dialogue with his minister *Ch'i Pai*, the Yellow Emperor is supposed by Chinese tradition to have composed his Neijing Suwen or Basic Questions of Internal Medicine, also known as the Huangdi

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Neijing. Modern scholarly opinion holds that the extant text of this title was compiled by an anonymous scholar no earlier than the Han dynasty just over two-thousand years ago.

During the Han dynasty, Zhang Zhong Jing, the Hippocrates of China, who was mayor of Chang-sha toward the end of the 2nd century A.D., wrote a Treatise on Cold Damage, which contains the earliest known reference to Neijing Suwen. The Jin dynasty practitioner and advocate of acupuncture and moxibustion, Huang-fu Mi (215–282 A.D.), also quoted the Yellow Emperor in his Jia Yi Jing, ca. 265 A.D.. During the Tang dynasty, Wang Ping claimed to have located a copy of the originals of the Neijing Suwen, which he expanded and edited substantially. This work was revisited by an imperial commission during the 11th century.

Classical Chinese Medicine (CCM) is notably different from Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). The Nationalist government elected to abandon and outlaw the practice of CCM as it did not want China to be left behind by scientific progress. For 30 years, CCM was forbidden in China and several people were prosecuted by the government for engaging in CCM. In the 1960's, Mao Zedong finally decided that the government could not continue to outlaw the use of CCM. He commissioned the top 10 doctors (M.D.'s) to take a survey of CCM and create a standardized format for its application. This standardized form is now known as TCM.

Today, TCM is what is taught in nearly all those medical schools in China, most of Asia and Northern America, that teach traditional medical practices at all. To learn CCM typically one must be part of a family lineage of medicine. Recently, there has been a resurgence in interest in CCM in China, Europe and United States, as a specialty. For example, see the program of Classical Chinese Medicine at National College of Natural Medicine. See also Heiner Fruehauf's website covering topics related to Classical Chinese Medicine.

Contact with Western culture and medicine has not displaced TCM. While there may be traditional factors involved in the persistent practice, two reasons are most obvious in the westward spread of TCM in recent decades. Firstly, TCM practices are believed by many to be very effective, sometimes offering palliative efficacy where the best practices of Western medicine fail, especially for routine ailments such as flu and allergies, and managing to avoid the toxicity of some chemically composed medicines. Secondly, TCM provides the only care available to ill people, when they cannot afford to try the western option. On the other hand, there is, for example, no longer a distinct branch of Chinese physics or Chinese biology.

TCM formed part of the barefoot doctor program in the People's Republic of China, which extended public health into rural areas. It is also cheaper to the PRC government, because the cost of training a TCM practitioner and staffing a TCM hospital is considerably less than that of a practitioner of Western medicine; hence TCM has been seen as an integral part of extending health services in China.

There is some notion that TCM requires supernatural forces or even cosmology to explain itself. However most historical accounts of the system will acknowledge it was invented by a culture of people that were already fed up of listening to Shamans trying to

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explain illnesses on evil spirits; any reference to supernatural forces is usually the result of romantic translations or poor understanding and will not be found in the Taoist-inspired classics of acupuncture such as the Nèi Jīng or Zhēnji Dàchéng. The system's development has over its history been skeptically analysed extensively, and practice and development of it has waxed and waned over the centuries and cultures which it has travelled—yet the system has still survived this far. It is true that the focus from the beginning has been on pragmatism, not necessarily understanding of the mechanisms of the actions—and that this has hindered its modern acceptance in the West. This, despite that there were times such as the early 18th Century when "acupuncture and moxa were a matter of course in polite European society".

The Chinese Medicine Timeline

The history of TCM can be summarized by a list of important doctors and books.

- Time unknown, author unknown, Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng (Classic of Internal Medicine by Emperor Huang)—Sù Wèn & Líng Shū. The earliest classic of TCM passed on to the present.
- Warring States Period (5th century B.C. to 221 B.C.): Silk scrolls recording channels and collaterals, Zu Bi Shi Yi Mai Jiu Jing (Moxibustion Classic of the Eleven Channels of Legs and Arms), and Yin Yang Shi Yi Mai Jiu Jing (Moxibustion Classic on the Eleven Yin and Yang Channels)
- Eastern Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) to Three Kingdoms Period (220—280 A.D.):
  - *Zhen Jiu Zhen Zhong Jing (Classic of Moxibustion and Acupuncture Preserved in a Pillow) by Huà Tuó*
  - *Shang Han Za Bing Lun aka Shāng Hán Lùn (Treatise on Febrile and Miscellaneous Diseases) by Zhāng Zhòng Jang*
- Jìn Dynasty (265–420): Zhēnjiu Dàchéng (Systematic Classic of Acupuncture and Moxibustion) by Huángfu Mì.
- Tang Dynasty (June 18, 618–June 4, 907).
  - *Bei Ji Qian Jin Yao Fang (Emergency Formulas of a thousand gold worth) and Qian Jin Yi Fang (Supplement to the Formulas of a thousand gold worth) by Sūn Sīmiao*
  - *Wai Tai Mi Yao (Arcane Essentials from the Imperial Library) by Wang Tao*
- Song Dynasty.
  - *Tóngrén Shūxué Zhēn Jiu Tú Jīng (Illustrated Manual of the Practice of Acupuncture and Moxibustion at (the Transmission) (and other) Acu-points, for use with the Bronze Figure) by Wáng Wéi Yī.*
  - *Emergence of Wenbing School*

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- Yuan Dynasty (1271 to 1368): Shísì Jīng Fā Huī (Exposition of the Fourteen Channels) by Huá Shòu.
- Ming Dynasty (1368 to 1644): Climax of acupuncture and Moxibustion. Many famous doctors and books. Only name a few:
  - *Zhēnjiu Da Quan (A Complete Collection of Acupuncture and Moxibustion) by Xu Feng*
  - *Zhēnjiu Jù Yīng Fa Hui (An Exemplary Collection of Acupuncture and Moxibustion and their Essentials) by Gāo Wu*
  - *Zhēnjiu Dàchéng (Compendium of Acupuncture and Moxibustion) by Yang Jizhou, a milestone book. 1601CE, Yáng Jì Zhōu .*
  - *Běncuo Gāng Mù (Compendium of Materia Medica) by Li Shízhēn, the most complete and comprehensive pre-modern herb book*
  - *Wen Yi Lun by Wu YouShing*
- Qing Dynasty(1644-1912):
  - *Yi Zong Jin Jian (Golden Reference of the Medical Tradition) by Wu Quan, sponsored by the imperial.*
  - *Zhen Jiu Feng Yuan (The Source of Acupuncture and Moxibustion) by Li Xuechuan*
  - *Wen Zhen Lun Dz by Ye TianShi*
  - *Wen Bing Tiao Bian(Systematized Identification of Warm Disease) written by Wu Jutong, a Qing dynasty physician, in 1798 C.E.*

Uses of TCM as Alternative Medicine

In the West, traditional Chinese medicine is considered alternative medicine. In mainland China and Taiwan, TCM is considered an integral part of the health care system. The term "TCM" is sometimes used specifically in modern Chinese medicine to refer to the standardized set of theories and practices introduced in the mid-20th century under Mao Zedong, as distinguished from related traditional theories and practices preserved by people in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the overseas Chinese.

TCM developed as a form of noninvasive therapeutic intervention (also described as folk medicine or traditional medicine) rooted in ancient belief systems, including traditional religious concepts. Chinese medical practitioners before the 19th century relied on observation, trial and error, which incorporated certain mystical concepts.

Like their Western counterparts, doctors of TCM had a limited understanding of infection, which predated the discovery of bacteria, viruses (germ theory of disease) and an understanding of cellular structures and organic chemistry. Instead they relied mainly

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on observation and description on the nature of infections for creating remedies. Based on theories formulated through three millennia of observation and practical experience, a system of procedure was formed as to guide a TCM practitioner in courses of treatment and diagnosis.

Unlike other forms of traditional medicine which have largely become extinct, traditional Chinese medicine continues as a distinct branch of modern medical practice, and within China, it is an important part of the public health care system. In recent decades there has been an effort to integrate Traditionai Chinese Medicine with scientific medicine. One important component of this work is to use the instrumentation and the methodologicai tools available via Western medicine to investigate observations and hypotheses made by the Chinese tradition.

However, in Hong Kong, the city dominated by Western medicine for more than a hundred years, traditional medicine has struggled for a long time to be recognized by the society.

Albeit Former Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa introduced a bill in his first Policy Address, aiming at recognizing the professional status of Chinese medicine practitioners and developing Hong Kong into an international centre for the manufacture and trading of Chinese medicine, and for the promotion of this approach to medical care, until December 1, 2006, according to Labour Department of HKSAR, Hong Kong people, for the first time, can use a certification issued by a registered Chinese medicine practitioner as a sick leave, representing that traditional medicine has established its social status in Hong Kong.

TCM is used by some to treat the side effects of chemotherapy, treating the cravings and withdrawal symptoms of drug addicts and treating a variety of chronic conditions, such as pains, that conventional medicine has not been able to treat.

In other countries it is not necessarily the case that traditional Chinese and Western medicine are practiced concurrently by the same practitioner. TCM education in Australia, for example, does not qualify a practitioner to provide diagnosis in Western medical terms, prescribe scheduled pharmaceuticals, nor perform surgical procedures. While that jurisdiction notes that TCM education does not qualify practitioners to prescribe Western drugs, a separate legislative framework is being constructed to allow registered practitioners to prescribe Chinese herbs that would otherwise be classified as poisons.

Theory of Chinese Medicine

The foundation principles of Chinese medicine are not necessarily uniform, and are based on several schools of thought. Received TCM can be shown to be most influenced by Taoism, Buddhism, and Neo-Confucianism.

Since 1200 B.C., Chinese academics of various schools have focused on the observable natural laws of the universe and their implications for the practical characterisation of

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humanity's place in the universe. In the I Ching and other Chinese literary and philosophical classics, they have described some general principles and their applications to health and healing:

- There are observable principles of constant change by which the Universe is maintained. Humans are part of the universe and cannot be separated from the universal process of change.
- As a result of these apparently inescapable primordial principles, the Universe (and every process therein) tends to eventually balance itself. Optimum health results from living harmoniously, allowing the spontaneous process of change to bring one closer to balance. If there is no change (stagnation), or too much change (catastrophism), balance is lost and illnesses can result.
- Everything is ultimately interconnected. Always use a holistic ("systemic" or "system-wide") approach when addressing imbalances.

Model of the Body

Traditional Chinese medicine is largely based on the philosophical concept that the human body is a small universe with a set of complete and sophisticated interconnected systems, and that those systems usually work in balance to maintain the healthy function of the human body. The balance of yin and yang is considered with respect to qi ("breath", "life force", or "spiritual energy"), blood, jing ("kidney essence" or "semen"), other bodily fluids, the Five elements, emotions, and the soul or spirit (shen).

TCM has a unique model of the body, notably concerned with the meridian system. Unlike the Western anatomical model which divides the physical body into parts, the Chinese model is more concerned with function. Thus, the TCM Spleen is not a specific piece of flesh, but an aspect of function related to transformation and transportation within the body, and of the mental functions of thinking and studying.

There are significant regional and philosophical differences between practitioners and schools which in turn can lead to differences in practice and theory.

Models of the body include:

- Yin or Yang
- Five elements
- Zang Fu theory
- Meridian (Chinese medicine)
- Three jiaos

The Yin/Yang and five element theories may be applied to a variety of systems other than the human body, whereas Zang Fu theory, meridian theory and three-jiao theories are more specific. There are also separate models that apply to specific pathological influences, such

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as the Four stages theory of the progression of warm diseases, the Six levels theory of the penetration of cold diseases, and the Eight principles system of disease classification.

Macro Approach to Disease

Traditional Chinese medicine has a "macro" or holistic view of disease. For example, one modern interpretation is that well-balanced human bodies can resist most everyday bacteria and viruses, which are ubiquitous and quickly changing. Infection, while having a proximal cause of a microorganism, would have an underlying cause of an imbalance of some kind. The traditional treatment would target the imbalance, not the infectious organism. There is a popular saying in China as follows: Chinese medicine treats humans while western medicine treats diseases.

A practitioner might give very different herbal prescriptions to patients affected by the same type of infection, because the different symptoms reported by the patients would indicate a different type of imbalance, in a traditional diagnostic system.

Western medicine treats infections by targeting the microorganisms directly, whether preventively (through sterilization of instruments, hand washing, and covering bandages), with antibiotics, or making use of the immune system through vaccines. While conventional medicine recognizes the importance of nutrition, exercise and reducing stress in maintaining a healthy immune system (and thus preventing infection), it also faces problems with antibiotic resistance caused by overuse of chemical agents and the high mutation rate of microorganisms. Pharmaceutical treatments also sometimes have side effects, the most severe of which are seen in regimens used to treat otherwise fatal illnesses, such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy for cancer, and antiretroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS.

The holistic approach of traditional Chinese medicine makes all practitioners generalists. Western medicine has general practitioners who dispense primary care, but increasing reliance is placed on specialists who have expertise in treating only certain types of diseases. Primary care physicians often refer patients to specialists. Emergency departments are located in large hospitals where many specialists are available.

Diagnostics

Following the macro philosophy of disease, traditional Chinese diagnostics are based on overall observation of human symptoms rather than "micro" level laboratory tests. There are four types of TCM diagnostic methods: observe (wàng), hear and smell (wén), ask about background (wèn) and touching (qiè). The pulse-reading component of the touching examination is so important that Chinese patients may refer to going to the doctor as "Going to have my pulse felt".

Modern practitioners in China often use a traditional system in combination with Western methods. Traditional Chinese medicine is considered to require considerable diagnostic skill. This often depends on the ability to observe what are described as subtle differences. This may be contrasted with a straightforward laboratory test which indicates an unambiguous

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cause. A training period of years or decades is said to be necessary for TCM practitioners to understand the full complexity of symptoms and dynamic balances. According to one Chinese saying, A good (TCM) doctor is also qualified to be a good prime minister in a country.

Techniques

- Palpation of the patient's radial artery pulse (Pulse diagnosis) in six positions
- Observation of the appearance of the patient's tongue
- Observation of the patient's face
- Palpation of the patient's body (especially the abdomen) for tenderness
- Observation of the sound of the patient's voice
- Observation of the surface of the ear
- Observation of the vein on the index finger on small children
- Comparisons of the relative warmth or coolness of different parts of the body
- Observation of the patient's various odors
- Asking the patient about the effects of his problem
- Anything else that can be observed without instruments and without harming the patient

Treatment

The below methods are considered as part of the Chinese medicine treatment:

1. Chinese herbal medicine
2. Acupuncture and Moxibustion
3. Die-da or Tieh Ta
4. Chinese food therapy
5. Tui na—massage therapy
6. Qigong and related breathing and meditation exercise
7. Physical exercise such as T'ai Chi Ch'uan and other Chinese martial arts
8. Mental health therapy such as Feng shui and Chinese astrology[
9. Modern TCM treatments consist of herbal medicine or acupuncture as the primary method, with other methods such as massage, qi gong, or food therapy playing a secondary role. Illness in TCM is seen as a lack of harmony, and the goal of all traditional treatment is to assist the body to regain balance and achieve homeostasis.

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The modern practice of traditional Chinese medicine is increasingly incorporating techniques and theories of Western medicine.

Specific treatment methods are grouped into these branches. Cupping and Gua Sha are part of Tui Na. Auriculotherapy comes under the heading of Acupuncture and Moxibustion. Die-da or Tieh Ta are practitioners who specialize in healing trauma injury such as bone fractures, sprains, and bruises. Some of these specialists may also use or recommend other disciplines of Chinese medical therapies (or Western medicine in modern times) if serious injury is involved. Such practice of bone-setting is not common in the West.

Branches

Traditional Chinese medicine has many branches, the most prominent of which are the Jingfang and Wenbing schools. The Jingfang school relies on the principles contained in the Chinese medicine classics of the Han and Tang dynasty, such as Huangdi Neijing and Shenlong Bencaojing. The more recent Wenbing school's practise is largely based on more recent books including Compendium of Materia Medica from Ming and Qing Dynasty, although in theory the school follows the teachings of the earlier classics as well. Intense debates between these two schools lasted until the Cultural Revolution in mainland China, when Wenbing school used political power to suppress the opposing school.

A Scientific View on Chinese Medicine

The Question of Efficacy

Much scientific research about TCM has focused on acupuncture. There is no scientific consensus as to whether acupuncture is effective or only has value as a placebo. Reviews of existing clinical trials have been conducted by the Cochrane Collaboration and Bandolier according to the protocols of evidence-based medicine; some reviews have found efficacy for headache and nausea, but for most conditions have concluded a lack of effectiveness or lack of well-conducted clinical trials. The World Health Organisation (WHO), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the American Medical Association (AMA) have also commented on acupuncture. These groups disagree on what is acceptable evidence and on how to interpret it, but generally agree that acupuncture is relatively safe (even if not effective) and that further investigation is warranted. The 1997 NIH Consensus Statement on Acupuncture summarized research and made a prediction as follows:

. . . promising results have emerged, for example, efficacy of acupuncture in adult post-operative and chemotherapy nausea and vomiting and in postoperative dental pain. There are other situations such as addiction, stroke rehabilitation, headache, menstrual cramps, tennis elbow, fibromyalgia, myofascial pain, osteoarthritis, low back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and asthma for which acupuncture may be useful as an adjunct treatment or an acceptable

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alternative or be included in a comprehensive management program. Further research is likely to uncover additional areas where acupuncture interventions will be useful.

Much less work in the West has been done on Chinese herbal medicines, which comprise much of TCM. Traditional practitioners usually have no philosophical objections to scientific studies on the effectiveness of treatments.

Some herbs have known active ingredients which are also used in Western pharmaceuticals. For example, ma huang, or ephedra, contains ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. (Due to the risk of adverse impact on the cardiovascular system and some deaths due to consumption of extracts in high doses, the use of ephedra is restricted in the United States.) Chinese wormwood (qinghao) was the source for the discovery of artemisinin, which is now used worldwide to treat multi-drug resistant strains of falciparum malaria. It is also under investigation as an anti-cancer agent.

In the West, many Chinese herbal medicines have been marketed as dietary supplements and there has been considerable controversy over the effectiveness, safety, and regulatory status of these substances. One barrier to scientific research on traditional remedies is the large amount of money and expertise required to conduct a double-blind clinical trial, and the lack of financial incentive from the ability to obtain patents.

There are a priori doubts about the efficacy of many TCM treatments that appear to have their basis in magical thinking—for example that plants with heart-shaped leaves will help the heart, or that ground bones of the tiger can function as a stimulant because tigers are energetic animals. Such doubts, however, do not invalidate the efficacy of the medicines themselves. While the doctrine of signatures does underlie the selection of many of the ingredients of herbal medicines, this does not mean the substances do not (perhaps by coincidence) possess the attributed properties. Given the thousand-year evolution of Chinese materia medica, it is possible that while herbs were originally selected on erroneous grounds, only those that actually proved effective have remained in use. In any case, clinical trials of Chinese herbal medicines will need to be conducted before the question can be considered resolved.

Mechanism of Action

The basic mechanism of TCM is akin to treating the body as a black box, recording and classifying changes and observations of the patient using a traditional philosophy. In contrast to many alternative and complementary medicines such as homeopathy, practically all techniques of TCM have explanations for why they may be more effective than a placebo, which Western medicine can find plausible. Most doctors of Western medicine would not find implausible claims that qigong preserves health by encouraging relaxation and movement, that acupuncture relieves pain by stimulating the production of neurotransmitters, or that Chinese herbal medicines may contain powerful biochemical agents. However, the largest barriers to describing the mechanisms of TCM in scientific terms are the difference of language and lack of research. TCM concepts such as qi and yin and yang are used to describe specific biological

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processes but are difficult to translate into scientific terms. Some research is now beginning to emerge explaining possible scientific mechanisms behind these TCM concepts.

Safety

Acupressure and acupuncture are largely accepted to be safe from results gained through medical studies. Several cases of pneumothorax, nerve damage and infection have been reported as resulting from acupuncture treatments. These adverse events are extremely rare especially when compared to other medical interventions, and were found to be due to practitioner negligence. Dizziness and bruising will sometimes result from acupuncture treatment.

Some governments have decided that Chinese acupuncture and herbal treatments should only be administered by persons who have been educated to apply them safely. "A key finding is that the risk of adverse events is linked to the length of education of the practitioner, with practitioners graduating from extended Traditional Chinese Medicine education programs experiencing about half the adverse event rate of those practitioners who have graduated from short training programs."

Certain Chinese herbal medicines involve a risk of allergic reaction and in rare cases involve a risk of poisoning. Cases of acute and chronic poisoning due to treatment through ingested Chinese medicines are found in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, with a few deaths occurring each year. Many of these deaths do occur however, when patients self prescribe herbs or take unprocessed versions of toxic herbs. The raw and unprocessed form of aconite, or fuzi is the most common cause of poisoning. The use of aconite in Chinese herbal medicine is usually limited to processed aconite, in which the toxicity is denatured by heat treatment.

Furthermore, potentially toxic and carcinogenic compounds such as arsenic and cinnabar are sometimes prescribed as part of a medicinal mixture or used on the basis of "using poison to cure poison". Unprocessed herbals are sometimes adulterated with chemicals that may alter the intended effect of a herbal preparation or prescription. Much of these are being prevented with more empirical studies of Chinese herbals and tighter regulation regarding the growing, processing, and prescription of various herbals.

In the United States, the Chinese herb má huáng; lit. "hemp yellow")—known commonly in the West by its Latin name Ephedra—was banned in 2004 by the FDA, although, the FDA's final ruling exempted traditional Asian preparations of Ephedra from the ban. The Ephedra ban was meant to combat the use of this herb in Western weight loss products, a usage that directly conflicts with traditional Asian uses of the herb. There were no cases of Ephedra based fatalities with patients using traditional Asian preparations of the herb for its traditionally intended uses. This ban was ordered lifted in April 2005 by a Utah federal court judge. However, the ruling was appealed and on August 17, 2006, the Appeals Court upheld the FDA's ban of ephedra, finding that the 133,000-page administrative record compiled by the FDA supported the agency's finding that ephedra posed an unreasonable risk to consumers.

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Many Chinese medicines have different names for the same ingredient depending on location and time, but worse yet, ingredients with vastly different medical properties have shared similar or even same names. For example, there was a report that mirabilite/sodium sulphate decahydrate was misrecognized as sodium nitrite, resulting in a poisoned victim. In some Chinese medical texts, both names are interchangeable. Chinese herbal medicine authorities are working towards improved standards in this area.

Relationship with Western Medicine

Within China, there has been a great deal of cooperation between TCM practitioners and Western medicine, especially in the field of ethno medicine. Chinese herbal medicine includes many compounds which are unused by Western medicine, and there is great interest in those compounds as well as the theories which TCM practitioners use to determine which compound to prescribe. For their part, advanced TCM practitioners in China are interested in statistical and experimental techniques which can better distinguish medicines that work from those that do not. One result of this collaboration has been the creation of peer reviewed scientific journals and medical databases on traditional Chinese medicine.

Outside of China, the relationship between TCM and Western medicine is more contentious. While more and more medical schools are including classes on alternative medicine in their curricula, older Western doctors and scientists are far more likely than their Chinese counterparts to skeptically view TCM as archaic pseudoscience and superstition. This skepticism can come from a number of sources. For one, TCM in the West tends to be advocated either by Chinese immigrants or by those that have lost faith in conventional medicine. Many people in the West have a stereotype of the East as mystical and unscientific, which attracts those in the West who have lost hope in science and repels those who believe in scientific explanations. There have also been experiences in the West with unscrupulous or well-meaning but improperly-trained "TCM practitioners" who have done people more harm than good in many instances.

As an example of the different roles of TCM in China and the West, a person with a broken bone in the West (i.e. a routine, "straightforward" condition) would almost never see a Chinese medicine practitioner or visit a martial arts school to get the bone set, whereas this is routine in China. As another example, most TCM hospitals in China have electron microscopes and many TCM practitioners know how to use one.

This is not to say that TCM techniques are considered worthless in the West. In fact, Western pharmaceutical companies have recognized the value of traditional medicines and are employing teams of scientists in many parts of the world to gather knowledge from traditional mouth healers and medical practitioners. After all, the active ingredients of most modern medicines were discovered in plants or animals. The particular contribution of Western medicine is that it strictly applies the scientific method to promising traditional treatments, separating those that work from those that do not. As another example, most

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Western hospitals and increasing numbers of other clinics now offer T'ai Chi Ch'uan or qigong classes as part of their inpatient and community health programs.

Most Chinese in China do not see traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine as being in conflict. In cases of emergency and crisis situations, there is generally no reluctance in using conventional Western medicine. At the same time, belief in Chinese medicine remains strong in the area of maintaining health. As a simple example, you see a Western doctor if you have acute appendicitis, but you do exercises or take Chinese herbs to keep your body healthy enough to prevent appendicitis, or to recover more quickly from the surgery. Very few practitioners of Western medicine in China reject traditional Chinese medicine, and most doctors in China will use some elements of Chinese medicine in their own practice.

A degree of integration between Chinese and Western medicine also exists in China. For instance, at the Shanghai cancer hospital, a patient may be seen by a multidisciplinary team and be treated concurrently with radiation surgery, Western drugs and a traditional herbal formula.

It is worth noting that the practice of Western medicine in China is somewhat different from that in the West. In contrast to the West, there are relatively few allied health professionals to perform routine medical procedures or to undertake procedures such as massage or physical therapy.

In addition, Chinese practitioners of Western medicine have been less impacted by trends in the West that encourage patient empowerment, to see the patient as an individual rather than a collection of parts, and to do nothing when medically appropriate. Chinese practitioners of Western medicine have been widely criticized for over-prescribing drugs such as corticosteroids or antibiotics for common viral infections. It is likely that these medicines, which are generally known to be useless against viral infections, would provide less relief to the patient than traditional Chinese herbal remedies.

Traditional Chinese diagnostics and treatments are often much cheaper than Western methods which require high-tech equipment or extensive chemical manipulation. TCM doctors often criticize Western doctors for paying too much attention to laboratory tests and showing insufficient concern for the overall feelings of patients. Modern TCM practitioners will refer patients to Western medical facilities if a medical condition is deemed to have put the body too far out of "balance" for traditional methods to remedy.

Chinese Herbology

Herbology is traditionally one of the more important modalities utilized in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Each herbal medicine prescription is a cocktail of many herbs tailored to the individual patient. One batch of herbs is typically decocted twice over the course of one hour. The practitioner usually designs a remedy using one or two main ingredients that

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target the illness. Then the practitioner adds many other ingredients to adjust the formula to the patient's yin/yang conditions. Sometimes, ingredients are needed to cancel out toxicity or side-effects of the main ingredients. Some herbs require the use of other ingredients as catalyst or else the brew is ineffective. The latter steps require great experience and knowledge, and make the difference between a good Chinese herbal doctor and an amateur. Unlike western medications, the balance and interaction of all the ingredients are considered more important than the effect of individual ingredients. A key to success in TCM is the treatment of each patient as an individual.

Chinese herbology often incorporates ingredients from all parts of plants, the leaf, stem, flower, root, and also ingredients from animals and minerals. The use of parts of endangered species (such as seahorses, rhinoceros horns, and tiger bones) has created controversy and resulted in a black market of poachers who hunt restricted animals. Many herbal manufacturers have discontinued the use of any parts from endangered animals.

History of Chinese Herbology

Chinese herbs have been used for centuries. The first herbalist in Chinese tradition is Shennong, a mythical personage, who is said to have tasted hundreds of herbs and imparted his knowledge of medicinal and poisonous plants to the agricultural people. The first Chinese manual on pharmacology, the Shennong Bencao Jing (Shennong Emperor's Classic of Materia Medica), lists some 365 medicines of which 252 of them are herbs, and dates back somewhere in the 1st century C.E. Han dynasty. Earlier literature included lists of prescriptions for specific ailments, exemplified by a manuscript "Recipes for 52 Ailments", found in the MaWangDui tomb, sealed in 168 B.C.E.

Succeeding generations augmented on this work, as in the Yaoxing Lun; also spelled Yao Xing Lun; literally "Treatise on the Nature of Medicinal Herbs"), a 7th century Tang Dynasty Chinese treatise on herbal medicine.

Arguably the most important of these was the Compendium of Materia Medica (Bencao Gangmu) compiled during the Ming dynasty by Li Shizhen, which is still used today for consultation and reference.

The history of this literature is presented in Paul U. Unschuld's "Medicine in China: a History of Pharmaceutics"; Univ. of Calif. Press, 1986.

Categorizing Chinese Herbs

Chinese physicians used several different methods to classify traditional Chinese herbs:

- The Four Natures
- The Five Tastes
- The Meridians

The earlier (Han through Tang eras) Ben Cao (Materia Medicae) began with a three-level categorization:

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Low level—drastic acting, toxic substances Middle levell—medicinal physiological effects High level—health and spirit enhancement

During the neo-Confucian Song-Jin-Yuan era (10th to 12th Centuries), the theoratical framework from acupuncture theory (which was rooted in Confucian Han theory) was formally applied to herbal categorization (which was earlier more the domain of Daoist natural science). In particular, alignment with the Five Phases (Tastes) and the 12 channels (Meridians theory) came to be used after this period.

The Four Natures

This pertains to the degree of yin and yang, ranging from cold (extreme yin), cool, neutral to warm and hot (extreme yang). The patient's internal balance of yin and yang is taken into account when the herbs are selected. For example, medicinal herbs of "hot", yang nature are used when the person is suffering from internal cold that requires to be purged, or when the patient has a general cold constituency. Sometimes an ingredient is added to offset the extreme effect of one herb.

The Five Tastes

The five tastes are pungent, sweet, sour, bitter and salty, each of which their functions and characteristics. For example, pungent herbs are used to generate sweat and to direct and vitalize qi and the blood. Sweet-tasting herbs often tonify or harmonize bodily systems. Some sweet-tasting herbs also exhibit a bland taste, which helps drain dampness through diuresis. Sour taste most often is astringent or consolidates, while bitter taste dispels heat, purges the bowels and get rid of dampness by drying them out. Salty tastes soften hard masses as well as purge and open the bowels.

The Meridians

The Meridians refer to which organs the herb acts upon. For example, menthol is pungent, cool and is linked with the lungs and the liver. Since the lungs is the organ which protects the body from invasion from cold and influenza, menthol can help purge coldness in the lungs and invading heat toxins caused by hot "wind".

The Fundamental Herbs of China

In Chinese herbology, there are 50 "fundamental herbs." These include:

1. Agastache rugosa—huòxiāng
2. Alangium chinense—bā jio fēng
3. Anemone or Pulsatilla chinensis—bái tóu weng
4. Anisodus tanguticus—shān làngdàng
5. Ardisia japonica—zijīn niú
6. Aster tataricus—ziwan
7. Astragalus membranaceus—huángqí or běiqí
8. Camellia sinensis—chá shù or chá yè

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9. Cannabis sativa—dà má
10. Carthamus tinctorius—hóng huā
11. Cinnamomum cassia—ròu gùi
12. Cissampelos pareira—xí shēng téng or
13. Coptis chinensis—duan è huánglián
14. Corydalis ambigua—yán hú suo
15. Croton tiglium—bā dòu
16. Daphne genkwa—yuánhuā
17. Datura metel—yáng jīn huā
18. Datura tatula—zi huā màn tuó luó
19. Dendrobium nobile—shí hú or shí hú lán
20. Dichroa febrifuga—chángshān
21. Ephedra sinica—cao má huáng
22. Eucommia ulmoides—dùzhòng
23. Euphorbia pekinensis—dàji
24. Flueggea suffruticosa (formerly Securinega suffruticosa)—yī yè qiū
25. Forsythia suspensa—liánqiào
26. Gentiana loureiroi—dì dīng
27. Gleditsia sinensis—zào jiá
28. Glycyrrhiza uralensis—gāncao
29. Hydnocarpus anthelmintica (syn. H. anthelminthicus)—dà fēng zi)
30. Ilex purpurea—dōngqīng
31. Leonurus japonicus—yìmucao
32. Ligusticum wallichii—chuānxiōng
33. Lobelia chinensis—bàn biān lián
34. Phellodendron amurense—huáng bai
35. Platycladus orientalis (formerly Thuja orientalis)—cèbai
36. Pseudolarix amabilis—jīn qián sōng
37. Psilopeganum sinense—shān má huáng
38. Pueraria lobata—gé gēn
39. Rauwolfia serpentina
40. Rehmannia glutinosa—dìhuáng or gān dìhuáng
41. Rheum officinale—yào yòng dà huáng
42. Rhododendron tsinghaiense—Qīnghai dùjuān
43. Saussurea costus—yún mù xiāng
44. Schisandra chinensis—wu wèi zi
45. Scutellaria baicalensis—huángqín
46. Stemona tuberosa—bai bù
47. Stephania tetrandra—fáng ji
48. Styphnolobium japonicum (formerly Sophora japonica)—huái, huái shù or huái huā
49. Trichosanthes kirilowii—guālóu
50. Wikstroemia indica—liao gē wáng

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3. Tradition of Unani Medicine

Unani (in Arabic, Hindustani, Persian, Pashtu, Urdu, etc) means Greek. It derives from the Greek word Ionia, the Greek name of the Asia Minor coastline, from the Arabic word for Greece, Al Yunaan.

It is also used to refer to Graeco-Arabicor Unani medicine (see below) based on the teachings of Hippocrates, based on the four humours Phlegm (Balgham), Blood (Dam), Yellow bile (Safra) and Black bile (Sauda—it seems to mean hard substance and black material.

Unani Medicine

Though the threads which comprise Unani healing can be traced all the way back to Claudius Galenus of Pergamum, who lived in the second century of the Christian Era, the basic knowledge of Unani medicine as a healing system was collected by Hakim Ibn Sina (known as Avicenna). The time of origin is dated at circa 980 A.D. in Persia. As an alternative medicine, unani has found favour in Asia, especially India. In India, Unani practitioners can practice as qualified doctors, as the Indian government approves their practice.

Unani medicine is very close to Ayurveda. Both are based on theory of the presence of the elements (in Unani, they are considered to be fire, water, earth and air) in the human body. (The elements, attributed to the philosopher Empedocles, determined the way of thinking in medieval Europe.) According to followers of Unani medicine, these elements are present in different fluids and their balance leads to health and their imbalance leads to illness. Most medicines and remedies (often common herbs and foods) used in Unani are also used in Ayurveda. While Unani was influenced by Islam, Ayurveda is associated with Vedic culture.

The base used in Unani medicine is often honey. Honey is considered by some to have healing properties and hence is used in food and medicines practiced in the Islamic world. Real pearls and metal are also used in the making of Unani medicine based on the kind of ailment it is aimed to heal.

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PART—Two

Herbs and Components

Common Names

Botanical Introduction

History & Discovery

Active Compounds

Remedial Properties

Doses and Safety

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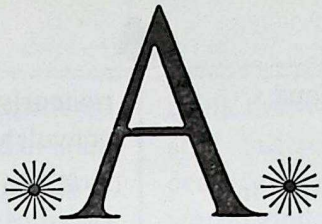

AARON'S ROD

Name: Mullien.

Biological Name: Verbascum thapsus, Scrophulariaceae.

Other Names: Mullein, Aarons Rod, Great Mullein, velvet plant, white mullein, verbascum flowers, woolen blanket herb, bullock's lungwort, flannel flower, shepherd's club, hare's beard, pig taper, cow's lungwort.

Parts Used: Dried leaves and flowers.

Active Compounds

Flavonoids such as verbascoside and herperidin, mucilage, saponins, tannins, volatile oil.

Remedies For

Expectorant, demulcent, diuretic, anti-inflammatory, nervine, anti-spasmodic, vulnerary, alterative, astringent.

Mullein is a good respiratory remedy. Also for toning the mucous membranes of the respiratory system, reducing inflammation whilst stimulating fluid production and thus facilitating expectoration. It is considered a specific in bronchitis where there is a hard cough with soreness. Its anti-inflammatory and demulcent properties indicate its use in inflammation of the trachea and associated conditions. Externally an extract made in olive oil is excellent in soothing and healing any inflamed surface or easing ear problems.

Combinations: In bronchitis it combines well with White Horehound, Coltsfoot and Lobelia. In painful coughing, Priest & Priest recommend combining with Elder and Red Clover, and for asthma with Gumweed.

Description

Native to Europe and parts of Asia.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried leaves or flowers and let infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

ABSINTHE

Name: Wormwood.

Biological Name: Artemisia absinthum

Other Names: Wormwood, absinthium, green ginger, absinthe, old woman, southernwood.

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Parts Used: Leaves or flowering tops.

Active Compounds

—Volatile oil with a high level of thujone.

—Sesquiterpene bitter principles: including absinthine, anab. sinthine, artabsine and matricine.

—Volatile oil, of variable composition, usually containing a- and b-thujone as the major component, up to about 35%; with thujyl alcohol, azulenes including chamazulene, 3,6- and 5,6-dihydrochamazulene; bisabolene, cadinene, camphene, sabinene, trans-sabinylacetate, pinene, phellandrene and others.

—Sesquiterpene lactones; artabsin, absinthin, anabsinthin, artemetin, arabsin, artabin, artabsinolides, matricin, isoabsinthin, artemolin and others.

—Acetylenes, in the root; trans-dehydromatricaria ester, Cl_3 and Cl_4 trans-spiroketalenol ethers and others.

—Flavonoids; quercitin 3-glucoside and 3-rhamnoglucoside, spinacetin 3-glucoside and 3-rhamnoglucoside and others.

—Phenolic acids; p-hydroxyphenylacetic, chlorogenic, p-coumaric, protocatechuic, syringic, vanillic and other acids.

—Lignans; diayangambin and epiyangambin.

Remedies For

—Loss of appetite.

—Dyspeptic complaints.

—Liver and gallbladder complaints.

Bitter, carminative, anti-microbial, anthelmintic, aromatic, tonic, antiseptic, febrifuge. The drug is administered for loss of appetite, dyspeptic disorders, bloating, meteorism and for dyspepsia as a result of convulsive gallbladder disorders.

In folk medicine, wormwood preparations are used internally for gastric insufficiency, intestinal atonia, gastritis, stomach. ache, liver disorders, bloating, anemia, irregular menstruation, intermittent fever, loss of appetite, and worm infestation.

Externally, the drug is applied for poorly healing wounds, ulcers, skin blotches, and insect bites.

Wormwood is primarily used as a bitter; it has the effect of stimulating and invigorating the whole of the digestive process. Used for indigestion, especially when due to a deficient quantity or quality of gastric juice. It is a powerful remedy in the treatment of worm infestations, especially roundworm and pinworm. It may also be used to help the body deal with fever and infections. It benefits the body in general.

Description

Native to Europe, N. Africa and Western Asia, cultivated in the USA and elsewhere.

The plant grows from 2 to 4 feet in height. The numerous flower heads are short-stemmed and hang in a many-flowered panicle. The capitula are small, globular, inclined and 3 to 4 mm wide and almost as long. The bracts are gray, silky-pubescent with a rounded tip. The outer ones are linear-oblong and pubescent while the inner ones are ovate, obtuse, broad and have a transparent, membranous margin. The receptacle is rough-haired. The flowers are yellow and fertile. The fruit is about 1.5 mm long.

Dosage

Mode of Administration: Comminuted herb is

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used for infusions and decoctions. Powdered herb, extracts and tinctures in liquid or solid forms are used for oral administration. Combination with other bitters or aromatics is common.

Preparation: To prepare an infusion, pour 150 ml boiling water over 1/2 teaspoonful of the drug, strain after 10 minutes. A decoction is prepared by adding 1 handful of drug to 1 liter of boiling water for 5 minutes. To prepare a tea, use 1 g drug in 1 cup water.

Pill: The powdered herb may be used to get rid of worms in the form of pills, thus avoiding the extreme, bitter taste.

Daily Dose: The total daily dose is 3 to 5 g of the herb as an aqueous extract. Internal dose of the infusion is 1 cup freshly prepared tea taken 30 minutes before each meal. The tincture dosage is 10 to 30 drops in sufficient water taken 3 times daily. The liquid extract dosage is 1 to 2 ml taken 3 times daily.

Externally, a decoction is used for healing of wounds and insect bites.

Storage: Wormwood must be kept in sealed containers and protected from light.

Safety

Due to the drug's thujone content, the internal administration of large doses can lead to vomiting, stomach and intestinal cramps, headache, dizziness and disturbances of the central nervous system. Continuous use is not advisable. The use of volatile oils and spirituous extracts from the drug for the manufacture of alcoholic drinks is forbidden in many countries because of possible injuries to health.

Caution: Wormwood is the principal herb used in absinthe, a bitter, aromatic, alcoholic drink that was very popular in Italy, France, and Switzerland during the nineteenth century. Because of the addictive nature of wormwood, and frequent side effects when absinthe was used to excess—dizziness, seizures, stupor, delirium, hallucinations, and even death—it has now been banned in nearly every country of the world.

CAUTION: WORMWOOD IS POISONOUS IF TAKEN IN LARGE DOSES. USE EXTREME CARE. DO NOT TAKE WITHOUT THE SUPERVISION OF A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL. *NOT RECOMMENDED.*

ACANTHOPANAX

Biological Name: Acanthopanacis. gracilistyliradicis, Araliaceae.

Other Names: acanthopanax, wu jia pi.

Parts Used: Root bark.

Remedies For

Antirheumatic, diuretic, circulatory stimulant.

This herb is closely related to Siberian ginseng and is believed to be very useful for the circulation of blood and qi. It also relieves fluid stagnation. Thus, it is useful for the elderly and for underdeveloped or slow-to-develop children. It is effective for chronic rheumatic and arthritic conditions caused by cold, wind, and dampness and for weakness of the bones and sinews.

Dosage

3–12 grams.

Preparation: Soak 30 grams of the herb in a 1/2 quart of strong spirits, such as vodka or gin. Take a teaspoon 3 times daily.

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Safety

This herb should not be used when there is in deficiency with heat signs.

ACHUVAGANDI

Name: Ashwagandha.

Biological Name: Withania Somnifera, Physalis flexuosa, Solanaceae family.

Other Names: Ashwagandha, winter cherry, Ashgandh, Achuvagandi, Amikkira-gadday, Amkulang-kalang, Amukkira-kilzhangu, Amukran-kizhangu, Asagandha, Asana, Asgandh, Asundha, Asvagandhi, Fatarfoda, Hirimaddina-gadday, Hirre- gadday, Penneroo-gadda, Pevette, Sogade-beru.

History

This herb is used for 4000 years plus in India. It is a very important herb in ayurveda, the traditional Indian medicine. It is used for tumors, inflammation (including arthritis), and a wide range of infectious diseases. The shoots and seeds are also used as food and to thicken milk in India.

Traditional uses of ashwagandha among tribal peoples in Africa include fevers and inflammatory conditions. Ashwagandha is frequently a constituent of Ayurvedic formulas, including a relatively common one known as shilajit.

Description

A native of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, Aswagandha is an important herb used in Ayurveda. The name comes from the peculiar odor of this herb, smell akin to that of a sweaty horse.

Aswagandha is an erect branched shrub with a greenish or lurid yellow flowers. Aswagandha in India is akin to ginseng in other parts of the orient. Both are touted for their longevity enhancing and sexually stimulating properties.

Parts Used: Root.

Active Compounds

Alkaloids and with anoloids.

Compounds known as withanolides are believed to account for the multiple medicinal applications of ashwagandha. These molecules are steroidal and bear a resemblance, both in their action and appearance, to the active constituents of Asian ginseng (Panax ginseng) known as ginsenosides. (Some people do call ashwagandha as "Indian ginseng".)

Generally, ashwagandha stimulates the immune system. It has also been shown to inhibit inflammation and improve memory. Taken together, these actions support the traditional reputation of ashwagandha as a tonic or adaptogen. It counteracts the effects of stress and generally promote wellness.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action

Alterative, aphrodisiac, astringent, nervine, rejuvenative, sedative, tonic.

Seeds possess the property of coagulating milk, but they also contain poisonous properties. Leaves and root are narcotic. Root is diuretic and deobstruent, tonic, alterative and aphrodisiac.

Known as Indian ginseng, this herb builds marrow and semen, and inhibits aging. It is one of the best herbs for the mind (clarity, nurturing).

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Uses

Alcoholism, Alzheimer's disease, anemia, breathing difficulty, cancer- for general strength during and after chemotherapy, carbuncles, convalescence, cough, emaciation, HIV support, AIDS, immune system problems, insomnia, lumbago, memory loss, mental function, clarity, MS, muscle energy loss, nerve exhaustion, overwork, fatigue, paralysis, rheumatism, rheumatic swellings, sexual debility, infertility, builds semen, skin afflictions, stress, swollen glands, ulcers, women's health - stabilizes fetus, regenerates hormones.

Action & Uses in Ayurveda & Siddha

Tikta, kashaya rasam ushna veeryam, katu vipakam, kapha vata haram.

Indications: Vranam, visham, aphrodisiac, strength giving, complexion improved, in kasam, swasam, soola, pandu, white leprosy, pruritis, karappan, fatigue.

Action & Uses in Unani

Cough, asthma, uterine diseases, expels balgham and souda, aphrodisiac, puerperal tonic.

Here are some applications of this herb from western herbals:

Mental Problems Improved: This is perhaps one of the most promising applications of this herb. In a reported study, this herb was given to 30 mental patients suffering from anxiety neurosis in doses of 40 ml/ day. (in two equally divided doses.) for one month. At the end of the month, most of the anxiety disorders, panic attacks and similar mood phobias, had disappeared. In trials by American psychiatrists, this herb had been found useful for the treatment of manic depression, alcoholic paranoia, and schizophrenia. Up to 4 capsules were given daily, in between meals, for 45–60 days with very good results. Learning enhancement and memory retention had improved substantially when aswagandha (3 capsules), gotu kola (2 capsules), and ginkgo biloba (2 capsules) were taken regularly on a daily basis.

Anti-Tumor, Anti-Inflammatory Effects Noticed: Studies with rats and human volunteers have shown that ashwagandha is helpful in putting cancer tumors into regression (used as an alcoholic root extract) and in reducing inflammation in rheumatoid arthritis. The plant's high steroid content was found to be more potent than hydrocortisone in animal and human arthritis. (Use 3000 to 6000 mg of the root powder or 500 mg 3 times daily of the alcoholic extract.)

Ayurvedic Applications

Root and bitter leaves are used as a hypnotic in alcoholism and emphysematous dyspnoea.

Root is used in doses of about 30 grains in consumption, emaciation of children, senile debility, rheumatism, in all cases of general debility, nervous exhaustion, brain-fag, low of memory, loss of muscular energy and spermator rhoea. It infuses fresh energy and vigor in a system worn out owing to any constitutional disease like syphilis, rheumatic fever etc., or from over-work and thus prevents premature decay.

Powder of the root mixed with ghee and honey in equal parts is prescribed for impotence or seminal debility. Take it in the evening, with milk. Leaves are used as an anthelmintic and as an application to carbuncles.

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Fruits or seeds are used as diuretic, and to coagulate milk.

Root is used as an application in obstinate ulcers and rheumatic swellings.

Specific Ayurvedic Remedies

As nutrient and health restorative.

A decoction of ashvagandha root is useful as nutrient and health restorative to the pregnant and old people. You can also take its powder with milk as an alternative. Ashvagandha Ghrita promotes the nutrition and strength of children. For improving the nutrition of weak children, give this for a fortnight.

For curing the sterility of women, Ayurveda practitioners often prescribe a boiled down decoction of ashvagandha, milk and ghee. Take this for a few days, soon after the menstrual period.

For spermatorrhoea, loss of strength etc., a powder consisting of Asvagandha, sugar, ghee, honey and long pepper is often given daily, with milk and rice diet.

Ashvagzndha root taken with milk or clarified butter acts as an aphrodisiac and restorative to old men. Ashvagandha - Vidari Combination is a herbal remedy for this condition.

Ashvagandha Herbal Invigorator is useful for consumption, seminal debility, and to help the nutrition of weak children.

For Lumbago, Pains: The powder of Aswagandha and sugarcandy, in ghee is often prescribed for lumbago, pains in the loins or small of the back.

Fresh green root of Asvagandha reduced to paste with cow's urine or with water heated applied to the parts affected is useful for scrofulous and other glandular swellings.

Narayana Taila, an Ayurvedic herbal remedy containing Aswagandha, is useful for consumption, emaciation of children and rheumatism and as an enema in dysentery and anal fistulae.

A ghrita prepared with a decoction and paste of ashwagandha root is used internally and an oil prepared with a decoction of the root and a number of aromatic substances in the form of a paste is used externally for rheumatism.

For Skin Diseases: Apply Ashvagandha powder well mixed with oil to the skin.

For Improving Eyesight: Take a mixture of Ashvagandha powder, liquorice powder and juice of emblic myrobalans.

Miscellaneous: Apply drops into the nose in deafness, and as an inunction over the body in hemiplegia, tetanus, rheumatism, and lumbago.

Use a decoction of the roots of Ashvagandha, Batatas paniculata and liquorice, with cow's milk as a gatactagogue.

Dosage

Preparation: Decoctions, ghee, oil, powder (1/4–3 tsp.) herbal wine.

For cancer and other serious illness, use one or more ounces daily.

Some experts recommend 1–2 grams of the whole herb, taken each day in capsule or tea form.

To prepare a tea, ashwagandha roots are boiled for 15 minutes and cooled; 3 cups (750 ml) should be drunk daily. Tincture or

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fluid extracts can be used in the amount of 2–4 ml three times per day.

Safety

Do not take if congested. No significant side effects have been reported with ashwagandha.

The herb has been used safely by children in India. Its safety during pregnancy and lactation are unknown.

Consult a physician before using this herb for serious illnesses such as cancer and AIDS. No proof of its effectiveness is known for these uses at this time.

ACONITE

Biological Name: Aconitum falconeri Ranunculaceae.

Other Names: Aconite, Monk's Hood, Vatsnabh, Midhavis Bis, Bikh, Meetha-tellia.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action

Small Doses: Anodyne, antidiabetic, antiperiodic, antiphlogistic, antipyretic, diaphoretic, diuretic.

Large Doses: Poison, sedative, narcotic.

Dosage

Tincture, extract from fresh leaves and flower tops; external liniment, poultice, homeopathic formula.

Safety

CAUTION: POISONOUS WITHOUT PROPER PURIFICATION. THE ROOT IS NOT USED INTERNALLY WITH HEART DISEASE. MAY CAUSE SEVERE HEADACHES. USE ONLY WITH THE ADVICE OF AN AYURVEDIC EXPERT. NOT RECOMMENDED.

ADA

Name: Ginger.

Biological Name: Zingiber officinale.

Other Names: Ginger; Ardrakam; Shunthi; Adrak; Sunth; black ginger; race ginger; African ginger; sheng jiang.

Parts Used: Rhizome (root).

Description

Ginger is an herb indigenous to southeastern Asia. It is cultivated in the U.S., India, China, West Indies and tropical regions.

Ginger is a creeping perennial on a thick tuberous rhizome. In the first year, a green, erect, reed-like stem about 60 cm high grows from this rhizome. The plant has narrow, lanceolate to linear-lanceolate leaves 15 to 30 cm long, which die off each year. The flower scape grows directly from the root and terminates in a long, curved spike. A white or yellow flower grows from each spike.

Active Compounds

The dried rhizome of ginger contains approximately 1–4% volatile oils. These are the medically active constituents of ginger; they are also responsible for ginger's characteristic odor and taste. The aromatic principles include zingiberene and bisabolene, while the pungent principles are known as gingerols and shogaols.

Volatile Oil

Components can vary greatly, depending on the country of origin. The main components of the volatile oil are:

—(–)-zingiberene and arcurcumene

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—beta-bisabolene and arcurcumene

—neral and geranial

—D-camphor

—beta-phellandrene

—geranial

—neral and linalool

—(E)-alpha-farnesene, important as aroma carrier zingiberol (mixture of cis- and trans-beta-eudesmol)

Arylalkane—Pungent Substances

Gingerols: Chief components [6]-gingerol, [8]-gingerol, [10]-gingerol

Shogaols: Chief components [6]-shogaol, [8]-shogaol, [10]-shogaol

Diarylheptanoids: Including, among others, gingerenone A and B.

History

Traditional Chinese medicine has recommended ginger for over 2,500 years. It is used for abdominal bloating, coughing, vomiting, diarrhea, and rheumatism. Ginger is commonly used in the Ayurvedic and Tibb systems of medicine for the treatment of inflammatory joint diseases, such as arthritis.

Remedies For

For over 2,500 years, ginger has been an important herb in Asian medicine. Traditionally it has been used to promote cleansing of the body through perspiration, to calm nausea. . . .

Action: Aromatic, carminative, stimulant to the gastro-intestinal tract, diaphoretic, expectorant, antiemetic, and stomachic, also sialagogue and digestive; Externally, a local stimulant and rubefacient.

Ginger is used for

—Atherosclerosis, heart disease

—Chemotherapy support

—Migraine headaches

—Morning sickness

—Motion sickness

—Nausea and vomiting following surgery

—Rheumatoid arthritis

—Belching

—Laryngitis

—Vomiting

—Constipation

—Incontinence

—Flatulence

—Colic

—Spasms

—Fever

—Eye diseases

—Asthma

—Colds

—Cough

Digestive System Actions

Ginger is a classic tonic for the digestive tract. Classified as an aromatic bitter, it stimulates digestion. It also keeps the intestinal muscles toned. This action eases the transport of substances through the digestive tract, lessening irritation to the intestinal walls. Ginger may protect the stomach from the damaging effect of alcohol and non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (such as ibuprofen) and may help prevent ulcers.

Allergies and Asthma

Dried ginger can help in the management of allergies and asthma by offsetting the effect of the platelet-activating factor (PAP). PAP initiates inflammatory processes in allergy

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and asthma. It was found to become more active after changes in blood chemistry that occur in a high-fat diet.

Atherosclerosis and High Cholesterol

Arthritis, bursitis, fibrocystic breasts, lymphedema, and pain. Ginger inhibits the production of immune-system components called cytokines. These chemicals are believed to create a long-term tendency toward inflammation. Ginger also stimulates blood circulation. These effects of ginger are taken advantage of in treating a number of disorders marked by swelling and pain, such as arthritis. Studies have also shown that ginger can relieve pain without the side effects typically found when using nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and steroids.

Anti-nausea/Anti-vomiting Actions

Research is inconclusive as to how ginger acts to alleviate nausea. Ginger may act directly on the gastrointestinal system or it may affect the part of the central nervous system that causes nausea. It may be that ginger exerts a dual effect in reducing nausea and vomiting.

Colds, Influenza, and Strep Throat

Shagaol.

Parasitic Infection

Ginger contains a chemical called zingibain that dissolves parasites and their eggs. In laboratory trials, ginger extracts have been shown to kill the anisakid worm (a parasite occasionally found in raw fish) within sixteen hours. Ginger tea is useful as a supplement in treating schistosomiasis, a parasitic disease.

Seizure disorders Ginger protects the body from the hepatotoxic effects of valproic acid (Depakene), a common treatment for seizure disorders. Ginger, when used on a daily basis, was found to improve the elevated levels of the liver enzymes alanine amino- transferase (ALT) and aspartate aminotransferase (AST).

Action and Uses in Ayurveda and Siddha

Ginger is an important herb used in Ayurveda. Ayurveda takes advantage of the following medicinal properties for ginger:

Analgesic, anti-emetic, aromatic, aphrodisiac, carminative, diaphorelic, digestive, expectorant, nervine, sialagogue, stimulant.

Ayurvedic practitioners consider ginger to be a truly a wonder drug, having so many healing properties. It was called the universal medicine. Taken with rock salt it reduces vayu; with rock candy it reduces Pitta; with honey it reduces Kapha. Thus it can be used to influence all tridoshas.

Ginger is used in the following ayurvedic remedies: katu rasam, ushna veeryam, vata-kapha-haram, katu-vipaka, lagu, snigdam, pachanam, ruchyam, vrishyam, swaryam, vibhanda haram, in grahani agnimanthyam. amavatham, chardhi, swasam, soolam, arsas, anaham, hrith-rogam, udhara rogam. It is used externally in kapha, swellings, headache.

Action and Uses in Unani

The following actions of ginger is taken advantage of in Unani Medicine:

Aphrodisiac, Carminative, digestive, removes obstruction in the vessels, removes viscid matter, and strengthens memory. In addition, ginger is used in nervous diseases, and for incontinence of urine.

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How to use Ginger

For treating indigestion, flatulence, colic, vomiting, spasms, stomach and bowel pains with fever, colds, cough, and asthma:

Use Ginger-jam

How to make the Jam.

Mix the juice from fresh ginger with water and cane sugar.

Boil it to a syrup like consistency.

Add saffron, powders of cardamom, nutmeg, and clove.

Store properly and use when needed.

For Indigestion with Want of Appetite: Mix together equal parts of ginger juice, lemon juice and rock salt. Mix well and take it before meals. Alternately, combine equal parts of ginger and rock-salt. Mix well. Take it just before meals. This cleanses the tongue and throat, increases the appetite and produces a pleasant sensation.

For Sciatica and Other forms of Rheumatism: A compound oil named Saindha vadya Taila is traditionally used in Ayurveda for this condition

For Bile and Delirium due to Biliousness: Mix 2 parts of ginger juice with 7 parts of cow's milk. Boil to half volume. Add rock-candy powder. Take this before going to bed.

Alternately, combine two parts each of ginger juice, mango-juice, fine sugar and cow's ghee. Mix well. Melt it down to half the quantity. Take in the morning and evening daily.

For Sore Throats, Hoarseness, and Laryngitis: Chew a piece of fresh ginger. This produces a copious flow of saliva.

For Diarrhea: Rub ginger juice on navel.

For Diabetes: Take ginger juice with rock candy twice daily.

For dyspepsia, loss of appetite and piles.

Use Samasarkara Churna: Another remedy, Saubhagya Sunti is used as a carminative tonic in dyspepsia and; in disorders of the alimentary canal in females after confinement.

For Nausea, and Vomiting: Take a combination of ginger juice and onion juice.

For Nervous Headache: Mix ginger juice with milk. Let dry. Use as snuff.

For Indigestion and Low Appetite: Mix ginger with ghee or hot water.

For Painful Bowels or Stomach: Make an infusion of dry ginger. Mix it with 1–2 tbs. castor oil. You can also take a mix of asafoetida and ginger powder.

For Chronic Rheumatism: Make an infusion of dry ginger (Sonth) (combining 1 part dry ginger with 24 parts water). Take this warm just before going to bed. Cover the body with blankets to induce perspiration.

For Dropsy and Cirrhosis of the Liver: Ayurvedic doctors from India believes that drinking the juice extracted from fresh ginger in gradually increasing doses acts as a strong diuretic that is useful in cases of general dropsy. Traditional literature suggests that:

"This method was tried 'in three cases of ascites with dropsy arising from cirrhosis of liver of recent origin and there was, when the juice was so administered, complete subsidence of ascites and disappearance of the dropsy.' The fresh juice of the drug acted as a strong diuretic. The patients passed gradually increasing quantities of urine daily."

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This remedy, however, was not effective in treating dropsy of chronic Bright's disease and chronic heart disease. In fact, these conditions got worse when this remedy was administered. Also, "long standing cases of cirrhosis with ascites did not derive the slightest benefit from its administration." The Ayurvedic literature goes on to state that "fresh ginger juice, when properly administered, will be found beneficial in cases of early cirrhosis of the liver with ascites and dropsy of the lower limbs."

For Dropsy: See Ginger Remedy for Dropsy.

For Rheumatism: See Sunta Ghrita. It is an Ayurvedic herbal remedy for rheumatism that incorporates ginger.

For Headache: Make a ginger paste by mixing dry ginger powder with a little water or aloe gel. Apply and rub this paste to the forehead before going to sleep.

For Neuralgic Headache: See Ginger Headache Remedy.

For Tooth or Face Aches: Make a paste of ginger powder and aloe gel or water. Apply the paste to the face.

For Fainting: See Ginger Remedy for Fainting.

For Cholera: In the collapse stage of cholera, powdered ginger is rubbed to the extremities, to check the cold perspiration, improve the local circulation, and to relieve the agonizing cramps.

For Vaginismus: Mix powdered dry ginger well with castor oil or with the paste of castor-root. Apply this to the painful parts.

Miscellaneous Home Remedies Utilizing Ginger

Ginger Rhubarb Digestive Remedy: This is an Ayurvedic child's digestive.

Ginger Rhubarb Tonic: This is an Ayurvedic tonic useful for digestion.

Ginger Ajowan Indigestion Remedy: An Ayurvedic home remedy for indigestion.

Ginger Stomach-ache Remedy: Ayurvedic home remedy for stomach-ache.

Dosage

Most people take 2–4 grams of the dried rhizome powder two to three times per day or a tincture of 1.5–3 ml three times daily.

For treatment of nausea, people try single doses of approximately 250 mg every two to three hours, for a total of 1 gram per day.

For prevention of motion sickness, many people start taking ginger tablets, capsules, or liquid herbal extract two days before the planned trip.

Perhaps the most versatile of all herbs, fresh ginger can be topically applied as a warm fomentation to relieve spasms pain and cramps. Simply cut several slices of the fresh root and place them in a pan of boiling water. Saturate a flannel cloth with the tea and apply it topically as warm as the body will bear. This is an ideal treatment for stiff neck and shoulders. The herb is cooked with meat to aid its assimilation and detoxify it. Fresh ginger tea is the most ideal herb to use for the first signs of mucus, cold, cough, and so on. To make it taste better, add honey. Drinking ginger tea with meals will greatly aid digestion and assimilation and is useful for those with weak, cold digestion.

Safety

Ginger is one of the most widely available and widely used herbal remedy on the planet.

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Billions of people use ginger safely daily as food and medicine. A few precautions should be followed, though.

Ginger should not be used by those with heat signs in the lungs or stomach.

Side effects of ginger are rare when used as recommended. However, some people may be sensitive to the taste or may experience heartburn. Persons with a history of gallstones should consult a nutritionally oriented doctor before using ginger.

Ginger can prolong the sleeping time induced by barbiturates. Use ginger with extreme caution if you are taking any kind of medication to induce sleep.

Ginger is contraindicated in morning sickness. Because of its cholagogic effect, ginger should not be taken in the presence of gallstone conditions except under the supervision of a doctor. The daily consumption of ginger root may interfere with the absorption of dietary iron and fat-soluble vitamins. Avoid taking ginger for two weeks prior to undergoing elective surgery.

Short-term use of ginger for nausea and vomiting during pregnancy appears to pose no safety problems; however, long-term use during pregnancy is not recommended.

Ginger can increase the potency of prescription medications used to prevent blood clots, such as aspirin, clopidogrel (Plavix), ticlopidine (Ticlid), or warfarin (Coumadin). Combining ginger with these medications could result in unexpected bleeding. Discuss with your physician before taking ginger to control nausea after surgery. If bleeding is a major risk, ginger should be avoided.

Addre's Mouth

Name: Chickweed.

Biological Name: Stellaria media.

Other Names: Addre's mouth, Indian chickweed, satin flower, starwort, stitchwort, tongue-grass, winterweed, starweed, star chickweed, tongue grass, Chickweed.

Parts Used: Herb.

Active Compounds

The active constituents are largely unknown. Chickweed contains relatively high amounts of vitamins and flavonoids, which may explain some of its effect. Although some older information suggests a possible benefit for chickweed in rheumatic conditions, this has not been validated in clinical practice.

History

Chickweed was reportedly used at times for food. Chickweed enjoys a reputation as treating a wide spectrum of conditions in folk medicine, ranging from asthma and indigestion to skin diseases. Traditional Chinese herbalists used a tea made from chickweed to treat nosebleeds.

Chickweed was used in cases of bronchitis, pleurisy, coughs, colds, hoarseness, rheumatism, inflammation, or weakness of the bowels and stomach, lungs, bronchial tubes. Chickweed was said to heals and smoothes anything it comes in contact with.

Chickweed had been used for external application to inflamed substances, skin diseases, boils, scalds, burns, inflamed or sore eyes, erysipelas, tumors, piles, cancer, swollen testes, ulcerated throat and mouth, and all kinds of wounds.

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Remedies For

Alterative, demulcent, refrigerant, mucilaginous, pectoral, resolvent, discutient.

Useful For

—Eczema & Insect stings and bites.

Traditionally used for all cases of bronchitis, pleurisy, coughs, colds, hoarseness, rheumatism, inflammation, weakness of the bowels and stomach, lungs, bronchial tubes, and any other forms of internal inflammation.

Chickweed may be used externally for inflamed surfaces, skin diseases, boils, scalds, burns, inflamed or sore eyes, erysipelas, tumors, piles, cancer, swollen testes, ulcerated throat and mouth, and all kinds of wounds.

Description

Chickweed is an annual or biennial weed found in abundance all over the world in gardens, fields, lawns, waste places, and along road sides. The usually creeping, brittle stems grow from 4 to 12 inches long and bear opposite, entire, ovate leaves. The small white flowers can be found blooming all year long in terminal, leafy cymes or solitary in the leaf axils.

Dosage

Although formerly used as a tea, chickweed's main use today is as a cream applied liberally several times each day to rashes and inflammatory skin conditions (*e.g.*, eczema) to ease itching and inflammation. As a tincture, 1–5 ml per day can be taken.

Safety

No side effects with chickweed have been reported.

ADEMETIONINE

Name: SAMe (S-Adenosylmethionine).

Biological Name: S-Adenosylmethionine.

Other Names: S-Adenosylmethionine, SAM, Ademetionine.

Active Compounds: S-adenosylmethionine is derived from two chemicals: methionine, a sulfur-containing amino acid; and adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the body's main energy molecule.

History

SAMe was discovered in Italy in 1952. It was first investigated as a treatment for depression. It was accidentally noted to improve arthritis symptoms—a kind of positive "side effect." SAMe is presently classed with glucosamine and chondroitin as a potential "chondroprotective" agent, one that can go beyond treating symptoms to actually slowing the progression of arthritis. This has not yet been proven.

SAMe is also sometimes used by Italian physicians in the first weeks of conventional treatment for depression, because it is thought to act more quickly than certain antidepressant drugs.

Remedies For

Principal Uses: Osteoarthritis, Depression.

Other Uses: Liver Disease, Fibromyalgia. There is growing evidence suggesting that SAMe is an effective treatment for osteoarthritis. However, the supplements glucosamine and chondroitin are much less expensive and just as well documented. Several small studies also suggest that SAMe can be helpful for depression. This supplement may be helpful for certain liver

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conditions such as the jaundice of pregnancy and Gilbert's syndrome. SAMe may also help fibromyalgia.

New evidence suggests that SAMe might help medications for Parkinson's disease work better and with fewer side effects.

Scientific Evidence of Effectiveness

Osteoarthritis: Several good scientific evidence supports the use of SAMe to treat osteoarthritis. Double-blind studies involving a total of more than a thousand participants suggest that SAMe is about as effective as standard anti-inflammatory drugs.

A double-blind placebo-controlled Italian study tracked 732 people taking SAMe, naproxen (a standard anti-inflammatory drug), or placebo. After 4 weeks, participants taking SAMe or naproxen showed about the same level of benefit as compared with those in the placebo group.

However, it should be noted that the dosage of naproxen used in this study was definitely on the low side, only 750 mg daily. This is about half the amount most people would use for arthritis. If a normal dosage of naproxen had been used, the therapeutic effect would probably have been greater, and the drug might have proven more effective. Therefore, this study alone does not prove that SAMe is as effective as conventional treatment when taken in proper doses.

Another double-blind study compared SAMe with a full dosage of the anti-inflammatory drug, piroxicam. A total of 45 individuals were followed for 84 days. The two treatments proved equally effective. However, the SAMe-treated individuals maintained their improvement long after the treatment was stopped, whereas those on piroxicam quickly started to hurt again.

Other studies showed that oral SAMe has equivalent benefits to various doses of indomethacin, ibuprofen, and naproxen.

Depression : In the human body, SAMe works as a methyl donor, which affects more than 30 different chemical reactions, including certain mood-enhancing brain chemicals like seratonin. The exact mechanism in which SAMe works is not yet know. There are many possible theories on how this may be working. A 1999 article in Newsweek stated, "Whatever the mechanism, there is little question that SAMe can help fight depression."

SAMe's antidepressant activity was first reported in 1976. Since then, several small double-blind studies involving a total of about 175 individuals have found oral SAMe to be an effective treatment for depression. Some of these studies compared SAMe with placebo, while others used a control group given another antidepressant drug.

In the last two decades, 40 clinical studies have been published with about 1400 patients. Although the number of patients is small, the results have been consistent. In 1994, a psychiatrist in Rome compiled results from a dozen controlled trials and concluded that SAMe's effectiveness in treating depression "is superior [to] that of placebo and comparable to that of standard... antidepressants."

Some research suggests that SAMe may work faster than conventional antidepressants, which often take several weeks to become effective. Researchers from the University of

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California, Irvine studied eighteen patients hospitalized for depression in 1988. In this study, intravenous SAMe was compared to oral imipramine (Tofranil), a commonly prescribed antidepressant. By the end of the second week, 66% of the patients on SAMe had improved by at least 50%, while improvement was reported by only 22% of the imipramine group. In another small study at UCI, severely depressed patients were given either SAMe or desipramine (a pharmaceutical antidepressant) for four-weeks. The SAMe recipients showed a slightly higher response rate (62%) compared to those on desipramine (50%).

Studies conducted thus far seem to indicate that SAMe may be as effective as traditional antidepressants. However, research has revealed fewer side effects, particularly as compared to the older drugs (tricyclics and MAO inhibitors) commonly used before the availability of SSRIs like Prozac and Zoloft. Reported side effects of SAMe have included mild stomach upset and headache, although frequently these symptoms go away after a couple of weeks.

CAUTION: THOSE WITH BIPOLAR DISORDER (COMMONLY CALLED MANIC DEPRESSION) SHOULD AVOID SAME BECAUSE IT CAN INDUCE MANIA IN PEOPLE WITH THE DISORDER.

Fibromyalgia: Few studies have been conducted specifically with Fibromyalgia patients. One study of 47 Fibromyalgia patients demonstrated a significant reduction in tender points. In this study, patients were treated with daily intramuscular injections of 200 mg of SAMe, in addition to taking 400 mg orally.

Dosage

A typical full dosage of SAMe is 400 mg taken 3 to 4 times per day. Take it for a few weeks and then try reducing the dosage. As little as 200 mg twice daily may be sufficient to keep you feeling better once the full dosage has "broken through" the symptoms.

Some people develop mild stomach distress if they start full dosages of SAMe at once. To get around this, start low and work up to the full dosage gradually.

Safety

SAMe appears to be quite safe, based on the results from both human and animal studies. The most common side effect is mild digestive distress. Like other substances with antidepressant activity, SAMe might trigger a manic episode in those with bipolar disease (manic-depressive illness).

Safety in young children, pregnant or nursing women, or those with severe liver or kidney disease has not been established. There may be risks involved in combining SAMe with standard antidepressants. Consult your doctor before combining SAMe with any antidepressant medication.

Drug Interactions

If You are Taking Standard Antidepressants: Do not take SAMe except on a physician's advice. Medications for manic-depressive disease: Do not take SAMe except on a physician's advice. Drugs that are "excreted by conjugation": It is possible that use of SAMe may require you to increase your medication dose. Ask your pharmacist for advice. Levodopa for Parkinson's disease: SAMe might help it work better.

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ADHARAJHADA

Name: Rough Chaff Tree.

Biological Name: Achyranthes aspera.

Family: Amarantaceae.

Other Names: Rough Chaff Tree, Prickly Chaff Flower, Apamarga, Apamara, Adharajhada, Aghada, Aghata, Antisha, Apamarga, Apamargamu, Apang, Atkumah, Chirchira, Duk.-Agari, Kadaladi, Katalati, Kharamanjari, Khare-vazhun, Kune-la-mon, Kutri, Latjira, Nayuruvi, Pan-dhara-aghada, Safed hedo, Shiru-kidaladi, Uttaraene, Uttaranee.

Description: This small herb found all over India. It is one of the Ayurvedic herbs.

Parts Used: Herb, leaves, seeds and root.

Constituents: The fruit contains a large percentage of alkaline ash containing potash.

Remedies: Astringent, alterative and antiperiodic, antibilious, diuretic, expectorant, purgative.

Uses and Dosage

For Renal Dropsies: Make a decoction by adding 2 oz. of the plant to 1.5 pints of water. Boil for 20–30 minutes. Strain. This is a good diuretic. Useful for renal dropsies.

Dose: One to two ounces of the mixture two or three times daily.

For Stomach Ache and Bowel Complaints, Piles, Boils, Skin Eruptions etc.: Use the leaf juice.

For Diarrhoea and Dysentery: A decoction of powdered leaves with honey or sugar candy is useful in the early stages of diarrhoea and dysentery.

For Fevers: Grind fresh leaves into a paste. Mix it with jaggery or black pepper and garlic. Form it into pills. This is a good antiperiodic especially in quartan fevers.

For Dropsies such as Ascites, Anasarca: Mix the ashes from the roots of the herb with water and jaggery. This is said to cure dropsies such as ascites, anasarca etc.

For Cough: A pinch of the root-powder with a pinch of pepper powder and honey is a remedy for cough.

For Bites of Poisonous Insects, Wasps, Bees etc.: Rub the leaves into a paste with water. Apply this into the affected area.

Grind the flowering spikes of the seeds into a paste with water. Apply externally to the affected region for bites of poisonous snakes and reptiles.

For Syphilitic Sores: Extract fresh juice from the leaves. Thicken the juice by evaporating by exposing to the sun. Mix it with a little opium. Apply to primary syphilitic sores.

Miscellaneous: Payasam or Kheer made of seeds in milk is a good remedy for brain diseases. An Infusion of the root is a mild astringent useful in bowel complaints. Seeds are used as an expectorant, or mixed with rice water for bleeding hemorrhoids. Seed soaked in buttermilk during the night and ground into an emulsion the next morning is a cure for biliousness.

Apply: Leaf juice applied to skin for over exposure to the sun. Leaves or seeds are used for poisonous animal bites.

Safety: Do not use while pregnant. Taken in large doses, it (especially the leaf juice) induces abortion or labor pains. No other information available.

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ADONIS VERNALIS

Other Names: False Hellebore, Ox-eye, Pheasant's Eye, Red Morocco, Rose-a-rubie, Sweet Vernal.

A Remedy For

—Irregular heartbeat.
—Weak heart.

In Russian folk medicine, Adonis is used for treating water retention, cramps, fever, and menstrual disorders, but its effectiveness for these problems is unproven. Homeopathic uses for Adonis include heart conditions.

What It Is; Why It Works

Medicinal benefits derive from the dried, above-ground portion of the plant, collected during the flowering season. Compounds found in the plant include substances that boost the action of the heart muscle. Animal tests show a tonic effect on veins. Legend has it that the plant sprang from the blood of the ill-fated Adonis, who was killed during a boar hunt. Found in Russia, Bulgaria, and Hungary, Adonis is one of the brightest and earliest spring plants, opening its anemone-like flowers during March. The plant is considered poisonous and is heavily protected in Germany.

Avoid If...

People taking digitalis-based drugs such as digoxin (Lanoxin) should avoid Adonis. It should also be avoided if you have a potassium deficiency.

Special Cautions

None are known.

Possible Drug Interactions

Adonis may enhance the efficacy—and side effects—of certain drugs, including:

—Calcium supplements.
—Diuretics such as HydroDIURIL and Lasix.
—Laxatives.
—Quinidine (Quinaglute, Quinidex).
—Steroid medications such as hydrocortisone and prednisone.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Adonis should be taken only in standardized powder form.

Typical Dosage

Adonis is taken orally. The usual daily dosage is 0.5 gram of standardized- powder. The maximum single dose is 1 gram and the maximum daily dosage is 3 grams. Adonis powder should be stored away from light and tightly sealed.

Overdosage

Although the drug is very potent if taken intravenously, the danger of an oral overdose is small.

ADOSA

Name: Malabar Nut.

Biological Name: Adhatoda vasika, Adenanthera vasika.

Other Names: Malabar Nut, Vasaka, Vasa, Adosa.

Description: This is a bush growing throughout India.

Parts Used: Leaves, roots, flowers, bark.

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MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action

Alterative, antispasmodic, diuretic, expectorant.

Uses

—asthma
— bleeding
— bronchitis
— cough
— diabetes
— diarrhea
— dysentery
— epilepsy
— fever
— flu
— hysteria
— insanity
— neuralgia
— repellent for fleas, mosquitoes, centipedes, flies and other insects
— rheumatic pain
— skin disorders
— swelling
— TB
— urinary disorders
— vomiting
— wasting

Dosage: Infusion, extract, decoction, poultice, powder.

Safety: No information about the safety of this herb is available.

Use Caution. Ayurvedic herbs are often taken in combination with others to neutralize the toxicity one herb with the opposing effect of other. Do not take except under the supervision of a qualified professional.

AFRICA PEPPER

Name: Cayenne.

Biological Name: Capsicum frutescens, capsicum annuum.

Other Names: Africa pepper, American pepper, bird pepper, capsicum, chili pepper, cockspur pepper, goat's pepper, pod pepper, red pepper, chillies, chili pepper, garden pepper, African red pepper, American red pepper, Spanish pepper, Zanzibar pepper, capsicum, Cayenne.

Parts Used: Fruit.

Active Compounds

Cayenne contains a resinous and pungent substance known as capsaicin. This chemical relieves pain and itching by acting on sensory nerves. Capsaicin temporarily stimulates release of various neurotransmitters from these nerves, leading to their depletion. Without the neurotransmitters, pain signals can no longer be sent. The effect is temporary. Capsaicin and other constituents in cayenne have been shown to have several other actions, including reducing platelet stickiness and acting as antioxidants.

History

The potent, hot fruit of cayenne has been used as medicine for centuries. It was considered helpful for various conditions of the gastrointestinal tract, including stomachaches, cramping pains, and gas. Cayenne was frequently used to treat diseases of the circulatory system. It is still traditionally used in herbal medicine as a

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circulatory tonic (a substance believed to improve circulation). Rubbed on the skin, cayenne is a traditional, as well as modern, remedy for rheumatic pains and arthritis due to what is termed a counterirritant effect. A counterirritant is something that causes irritation to a tissue to which it is applied, thus distracting from the original irritation (such as joint pain in the case of arthritis).

Remedies For

Strimulant, tonic, sialagogue, alterative, rubefacient, carminative, digestive.

Useful For

—Bursitis

—Diabetic neuropathy

—Osteoarthritis

—Psoriasis

—Rheumatoid arthritis

—Shingles (herpes zoster)/postherpetic neuralgia

Cayenne pepper has beneficial antioxidant and cardiovascular effects.

It has many beneficial effects on gastrointestinal function.

Antioxidant Activity: The carotene molecules of cayenne pepper and paprika exert powerful antioxidant effects.

Cardiovascular Effects: Cayenne pepper exerts a number of beneficial effects on the cardiovascular system. It reduces the likelihood of developing, atherosclerosis by reducing blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels. It also reduces the platelet aggregation and increases fibrinolytic activity. Cultures consuming a large amount of cayenne pepper have a much lower rate of cardiovascular disease.

Topical Effects: When topically applied to the skin or mucous membranes, capsaicin stimulates and then block small diameter pain fibers by depleting them of neurotransmitter called substance P. Substance P is believed to be the principal transmitter of pain impulses. It also has been shown to activate inflammatory mediators in joint tissues in osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Clinical Applications: Capsaicin lowers body temperature by stimulating the cooling center of the hypothalamus in the brain. It appears that people who live in tropics deals with high temperature by consuming cayenne pepper.

Cayenne ointments may offer benefits in a number of conditions, including pain disorders (postamputation pain, postmastectomy pain, post herpetic neuralgia, diabetic neuropathy, cluster headaches, osteoarthritis, and rheumatoid arthritis. Topically applied capsaicin may be useful in the treatment of psoriasis.

Pain Relief: Capsaicin was found to relieve the pain associated with shingles (herpes zoster), a clinical condition known as post-herpetic neuralgia. Clinical trials have shown that about 50% of those taking capsaicin report improvement as opposed to 10% for the placebo group. Topically applied capsaicin may be effective in reducing the pain of trigeminal neuralgia, a painful disorder of the main nerve of the face characterized by severe, stabbing pain affecting the cheek, lips, gums, or chin on one side of the face. In one study, more than 80% of those treated with capsaicin responded favorably. This is remarkable as there are no medication available for this condition except surgery.

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Capsaicin may help relieve the pain following breast reconstruction or mastectomy.

Mouth Pain due to Chemotherapy or Radiation: Capsaicin was found to reduce the pain of mouth sores resulting from chemotherapy or radiation treatment dramatically in a clinical trial.

Diabetic Neuropathy: Diabetic neuropathy is a painful nerve disorder caused by long-term diabetes. Capsaicin has been found to be of considerable benefit in relieving pain of this condition.

Cluster Headaches: Cluster headaches are migraine-like headaches characterized by severe pain, usually localized around one eye. Double blind studies have shown that intranasal application of a special capsaicin ointment by a physician may relieve cluster headaches. Episodic patients were found to benefit more from the treatment than chronic patients.

Arthritis: Capsaicin may be effective in relieving the pain of either osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis.

Psoriasis: Excessive substance P levels in the skin have been linked to psoriasis. Capsaicin was found to reduce scaling, redness and combined psoriasis severity.

Description: Originally from South America, the cayenne plant has spread across the globe both as a food and as a medicine. Cayenne is very closely related to bell peppers, jalapenos, paprika, and other similar peppers. The fruit is used.

Cayenne is a perennial plant in its native tropical habitat; but is annual when cultivated elsewhere. It grows to a height of 3 feet or more. Its stem is woody at the bottom and branched near the top. The leaves are ovate generally. The flowers are white to yellow. It may grow alone, in pairs or threes. The flowers appear from April to September. The fruit is a many seeded pod with a leathery outside in various shades of yellow or red.

Dosage

Creams containing 0.025–0.075 % capsaicin are generally used. There may be a burning sensation for the first several times the cream is applied, but this should gradually decrease with each use. The hands must be carefully and thoroughly washed after use, or gloves should be worn, to prevent the cream from accidentally reaching the eyes, nose, or mouth, which would cause a burning sensation.

Do not apply the cream to areas of broken skin.

A cayenne tincture can be used in the amount of 0.3–1 ml three times daily.

Infusion: Use 0.5 to 1 tsp. Pepper per cup of boiling water. Take warm, 1 tbsp. at a time.

Powder: For acute conditions. Take 3 to 10 grains, for chronic conditions 1 to 3 grains.

Safety

Besides causing a mild burning for the first few applications (or severe burning if accidentally placed in sensitive areas, such as the eyes), there are no side effects from use of the capsaicin cream. Very high intake of cayenne internally may cause ulcers, but the necessary amount is rarely achieved with sensible intake. As with anything applied to the skin, some people may have an allergic reaction to the cream, so the first application should be to a very small area of skin.

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Prolonged application to the skin can cause dermatitis and raise blisters. Excessive consumption can result in gastroenteritis and kidney damage.

Agaricus Blazei Murill

Latin Name: Agaricus blazei murill.

Other Names: Cogumelo do Sol, Cogumelo do Deus, Himematsutake.

A Remedy For

Products derived from the mushroom Agaricus blazei murill are sold as a tonic to reduce fatigue, improve general health, and boost the immune system.

What It Is; Why It Works

Native to Brazil, Agaricus Blazei Murill mushrooms are now also cultivated in Japan, Korea, and the United States. The mushroom's effect on the immune system has been verified by clinical trials, which have shown an increase in the number of white blood cells, a rise in the activity of natural killer cells, and an increase in production of tumor necrosis factor-alpha. Researchers in Korea and Japan have declared it an effective treatment for supporting the immune systems of cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy. Agaricus Blazei Murill mushrooms are thought to owe their beneficial effects to beta-glucans, a group of immune-boosting agents also found in shiitake, maitake, and reishi mushrooms, as well as in yeast.

Avoid If...

Other than an allergy to mushrooms, there is no known reason to avoid this herb.

Special Cautions

No side effects have been reported in Japan, where the product has been in use as a dietary supplement for over eight years. The most common side effects of other mushroom products are nausea and upset stomach.

Possible Drug Interactions

There is a theoretical possibility that the beta-glucans in this product may enhance the effect of some cancer drugs and antibiotics. However, no practical benefit from this interaction has yet been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Agaricus Blazei Murill extracts have not been tested in pregnant women or breastfeeding mothers. Because their effects during pregnancy are unknown, it's best to avoid them if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. Avoid this herb, too, while nursing.

How to Prepare

Agaricus Blazei Murill mushrooms are available whole, in freeze-dried extract form, as a granulated powder, and as a liquid extract.

Typical Dosage

Dosage recommendations vary with the purity and strength of the preparation. Follow the manufacturers directions carefully.

Overdosage

No cases of overdosage have been reported.

Agnus Castus

Name: Chaste Berry.

Biological Name: Vitex agnus-castus, Vitex rotundifolia, Vitex trifolia, Fructus viticis Verbenaceae.

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Other Names: Chaste Berry, Vitex, Chasteberry, Monk's pepper, Cloister pepper, Agnus Castus, Man jing zi.

Parts Used: The fruit.

Active Compounds: Iridoid glycosides which include aucbin and agnoside.

Flavonoids including casticin, isovitexin and orientin Essential oil.

History

Chasteberry has been used since ancient times as a female remedy. One of its properties was to reduce sexual desire, and it is recorded that Roman wives whose husbands were abroad with the legions spread the aromatic leaves on their couches for this purpose. It became known as the chasteberry tree. During the Middle Ages, Chasteberry's supposed effect on sexual desire led to it becoming a food spice at monasteries, where it was called "Monk's pepper" or "Cloister pepper."

In tradition, it was also known as an important European remedy for controlling and regulating the female reproductive system. Long used to regularize monthly periods and treat amenorrhea and dysmenorrhea, it also helped ease menopausal problems and aided the birth process.

Recent investigations show the presence of compounds which are able to adjust the production of female hormones. It is thought to contain a progesterone-like compound and is now thought to be useful in the following conditions: Amenorrhea, Dysmenorrhea, PMS, Endometriosis. A German study has found that extracts of this herb can stimulate the release of Leutenizing Hormone (LH) and inhibit the release of Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH). This herb was also found tobe useful as an aid in Premenstrual Tension. A work done in England has shown that 60 % of women who participated in a study reported reduction or elimination of PMS symptoms such as anxiety, nervous tension, insomnia, or mood changes. The herb was also found to help with the premenstrual water retention.

Remedies For

Diaphoretic, antipyretic, regulatory, Uterine Tonic

Useful for the Treatment of:

—Fibrocystic Breast Disease

—Infertility (Female)

—Menopause

—Menorrhagia (Heavy Menstruation)

—Menstrual Difficulties (Secondary Amenorrhea)

—Premenstrual Syndrome

Chasteberry has the effect of stimulating and normalizing pituitary gland functions, especially its progesterone function. It may be called an amphoteric remedy, as it can produce apparently opposite effects though in truth it is simply normalizing. It will usually enable what is appropriate to occur. The greatest use of Chasteberry lies in normalizing the activity of female sex hormones and it is thus indicated for dysmenorrhoea, premenstrual stress and other disorders related to hormone function. Beneficial during menopausal changes. May be used to aid the body to regain a natural balance after the use of the birth control pill.

Vitex helps restore a normal estrogen-to-progesterone balance. It can not

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only ease but, with time, actually cure premenstrual syndrome, which has been linked to abnormally high levels of estrogen, especially if symptoms tend to disappear when menstruation begins. Vitex can also help with irregular menstruation (especially if accompanied by endometriosis). Vitex also helps resolve hormonally-related constipation. Vitex may help cure fibroid cysts that occur in the smooth muscle tissue. Vitex may also help reduce some of the undesirable symptoms of menopause such as hot flashes associated with the reduction in the production of progesterone. Vitex can stabilize the cycle after withdrawal from progesterone birth control pills. Several studies indicate that vitex can help control acne in teenagers, young women and men.

For women who are trying to get pregnant, vitex may be helpful to help regulate the ovulatory cycle. It may be taken throughout the end of the third month of pregnancy, which may help prevent miscarriage, according to German research. After the third month it is still safe to take but is not recommended, because it may bring on the flow of milk too early.

Traditional Chinese Medicine: Relieves wind heat, clears heat from the liver channel. The Chinese variety is particularly useful for headache, dizziness, eye pain, and muscular aches and pains. The Western variety has a somewhat different usage—as a female hormonal regulator.

Description: Vitex grows in the Mediterranean countries and Central Asia. The dried fruit, which has a pepper—like aroma and flavor, is used.

Dosage: Infusion: pour a cup of boiling water onto 1 teaspoonful of the ripe berries and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Clinical research shows that vitex may start working to treat imbalances after about 10 days, but for full benefit it should be taken up to 6 months or longer. With PMS, a positive result may be felt by the second menstruation, but permanent improvement may take up to a year or longer.

Safety: Vitex should be used with caution by those who are weak or anemic.

Side effects of using vitex are rare. Minor gastrointestinal upset and a mild skin rash with itching have been reported in less than 2% of the women monitored while taking vitex. Vitex is not recommended for use during pregnancy.

AGNUS-CASTUS

Name: Vitex.

Biological Name: Vitex negundo, Vitex agnus castus.

Other Names: Five Leafed Chaste Tree, Chasteberry, Nirgundi, Sambhalu, vitex, Agnus-castus, chaste tree, monk's pepper, cloister pepper, Indrani, Nirgandhi, Nochi.

Description

This plant is indigenous to the Mediterranean countries and Central Asia. It is also found in parts of India and in Burma. The dried fruit, which has a pepper-like aroma and flavor, is used in western herbalism.

Parts Used: Roots, root, flowers, leaves, bark.

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Active Compounds

Chasteberry has not been significantly investigated for its therapeutic effects. However, preliminary investigations do indeed show the presence of compounds which are able to adjust the production of female hormones.

It is thought to contain a progesterone-like compound The chemical constituents are the monoterpenes agnuside, eurostoside, and aucubin. Chasteberry also contains the flavonoids casticin, chryso-splenol and vitexin.

Animal studies have shown that extracts of Agnus castus can stimulate the release of Leutenizing Hormone (LH) and inhibit the release of Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH). Another study found that extracts of Chasteberry can stimulate the release of Leutenizing Hormone (LH) and inhibit the release of Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH). This hormonal effect has been confirmed in another laboratory report which suggests that the volatile oil has a progesterone-like effect.

Thus, Vitex's benefits stem from its actions upon the pituitary gland—specifically on the production of luteinizing hormone. This increases progesterone production and helps regulate a woman's cycle. Vitex also keeps prolactin secretion in check. The ability to decrease excessive prolactin levels may benefit infertile women.

History

Chasteberry has been used since ancient times as a female remedy. One of its properties was to reduce sexual desire, and it is recorded that Roman wives whose husbands were abroad with the legions spread the aromatic leaves on their couches for this purpose. It became known as the chasteberry tree.

During the Middle Ages, Chasteberry's supposed effect on sexual desire led to it becoming a food spice at monasteries, where it was called "Monk's pepper" or "Cloister pepper."

In tradition, it was also known as an important European remedy for controlling and regulating the female reproductive system. Long used to regularize monthly periods and treat amenorrhea and dysmenorrhea, it also helped ease menopausal problems and aided the birth process.

Hippocrates, Dioscorides, and Theophrastus mention the use of vitex for a wide variety of conditions, including hemorrhage following childbirth, and also to assist with the "passing of afterbirth." Decoctions of the fruit and plant were also used in sitz baths for diseases of the uterus.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action

Leaves-anti-parasitical, alterative, aromatic, vermifuge, pain reliever.

—Root-tonic, febrifuge, expectorant, diuretic

—Fruit-nervine, cephalic, emmanagogue.

—Dried fruit-vermifuge

—Vitex is useful for the treatment of:

—Amenorrhea

—Catarrh

—Cholera

—Colic

—Diarrhea

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—Dysmenorrhea
—Dyspepsia
—Ear disorders
—Endometriosis
—Fever
—Fibrocystic Breast Disease
—Headache
—Heart Disease
—Hemicrania
—Hemorrhoids
—Infertility (Female)
—Liver disorders
—Malaria
—Menopause
—Menorrhagia (Heavy Menstruation)
—Menstrual Difficulties (Secondary Amenorrhea)
—Nausea
—Premenstrual Syndrome
—Rheumatism
—Skin diseases
—Ulcers
—Worms

A study conducted in London (double blind study) showed a 60% group reduction or elimination of PMS symptoms such as anxiety, nervous tension, insomnia, or mood changes, from subjects who were taking dried agnus castus capsules.

Employing an aqueous extract from the fruit, a 1979 study reported good results on premenstrual water retention. Women were able to sustain a good level of milk production for breast feeding while taking this herb. While it took some time for the drug to take effect, the women were able to continue the use of the drug for months without harmful side effects.

Leaves are insect repellents. It is also useful for rheumatic swellings. Root juice is said to increases the growth of hair. Decoction of leaves may improve eyesight.

Dosage

Fruit powder-sugar/water or honey paste, decoction; powder, tincture, decoction, poultice.

Many people take 40 drops (in a glass of water) of the concentrated liquid herbal extract in the morning.

Vitex is also available in powdered form in tablets and capsules, again to be taken in the morning.

With its emphasis on long-term balancing of a woman's hormonal system, vitex is not a fast-acting herb. For premenstrual syndrome or frequent or heavy periods, vitex can be used continuously for four to six months. Women with amenorrhea and infertility can remain on vitex for twelve to eighteen months, unless pregnancy occurs during treatment.

Safety

Side effects of using vitex are rare. Minor gastrointestinal upset and a mild skin rash with itching have been reported in less than 2% of the women monitored while taking vitex. Vitex is not recommended for use during pregnancy.

Use caution when taking any herb. Ayurvedic herbs are often taken in combination with

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others to neutralize the toxicity one herb with the opposing effect of other. Do not take except under the supervision of a qualified professional.

AGRIMONY

Name: Agrimony.

Biological Name: Agrimonia eupatoria.

Rose Family: Rosaceae.

Other Names: Agrimony, Church steeples, Cocklebur, Philanthropos, Stickwort.

Parts Used: Flowering stem tips and leaves.

History

Agrimony has a long history of medicinal use. Through the ages, it was considered a panacea.

The ancient Greeks used agrimony to treat eye ailments.

Agrimony brews were used to heal diarrhea, disorders of the gallbladder, liver and kidneys. It was used for healing wounds and later it was used for Athlete's foot.

Remedies For

—anti-inflammatory

—antibiotic

—astringent

Used as a tonic, diuretic and for congestive disorders, including diarrhea Applied to slow-healing wounds.

AGUE TREE

Name: Sassafras.

Biological Name: Sassafras albidum, Sassafras officinale.

Other Names: Sassafras, Ague tree, cinnamon wood, saxifrax, saloip.

Description

Sassafras is a native North American deciduous tree. In places it is also grown as an ornamental. The stem, which is usually 10 to 40 feet high but sometimes reaches 125 feet, is covered with rough, grayish bark. The leaves are alternate, downy on the lower side, and variable in shape from ovate to elliptic, entire or three-lobed. The small, yellowish-green flowers grow in racemes, blooming before the leaves appear. The fruit is a pea-sized, yellowish-green drupe.

Parts Used: Bark.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action

Anodyne, antiseptic, diaphoretic, diuretic, stimulant, aromatic, alterative.

Uses

A hot infusion of sassafras bark makes a good "blood purifier," promoting perspiration and urination. It has therefore been recommended for rheumatism, gout, arthritis, and skin problems. For the latter, as for various ulcers, combined internal and external use is recommended. The bark of the roots contains a volatile oil that has anodyne and antiseptic properties. It has been used in the past as a pain reliever and also to treat venereal disease. American Indians used an infusion of sassafras roots to bring down a fever. Sassafras tea has also had its day as a popular tonic drink.

Dosage

Infusion: Steep 1 tsp. Bark in 1 cup water. Take 1 cup a day.

Tincture: A dose is 15 to 30 drops.

Safety: No information available.

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AGUEWEED

Name: Boneset.

Biological Name: Eupatorium perfoliatum Compositae.

Other Names: Feverwort, Boneset, Agueweed, crosswort, eupatorium, Indian sage, sweating plant, teasel, thoroughwort, vegetable antimony, wood boneset.

Parts Used: Dried aerial parts.

Active Compounds

Sesquiterpene lactones; eupafolin, euperfolitin, eufoliatin, eufoliatorin, euperfolide, eucannabinolide and helenalin.

Immunostimulatory polysaccharides, mainly 4-0-methylglucuroxylans.

Flavonoids; quercitin, kaempferol, hyperoside, astragalin, rutin, eupatorin & others.

Miscellaneous: Diterpenes–dendroidinic acid, hebenolide; sterols; volatile oil.

Remedies For

Diaphoretic, bitter, laxative, tonic, anti-spasmodic, carminative, astringent.

Boneset is one the best remedies for the relief of the associated symptoms that accompany influenza.

It will speedily relieve the aches and pains as well as aid the body in dealing with any fever that is present.

Boneset may also be used to help clear the upper respiratory tract of mucous congestion. Its mild aperient activity will ease constipation. It may safely be used in any fever and also as a general cleansing agent. It may provide symptomatic aid in the treatment of muscular rheumatism.

Description

Boneset is an indigenous perennial plant found in swampy areas and along stream banks in eastern North America. The rough, hairy stem grows to a height of 1 to 5 feet from a horizontal, crooked rootstock. The leaves are rough, serrate, and taper to a long point. White flowers appear in August and September. The plant has only a weak odor but a very bitter taste.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk as hot as possible. During fevers or the flu it should be drunk every half hour.

Tincture: Take 2–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: In the treatment of influenza it may be combined with Yarrow, Elder Flowers, Cayenne or Ginger. With Pleurisy Root and Elecampane in bronchial conditions.

Safety: Not available.

ARKA

Name: Arka.

Biological Name: Calotropis gigantea, Asclepias gigantea, Asclepiadaceae family.

Other Names: Gigantic Swallowort, Aka, Arka, Akado, Akanda, Akda, Akra, Alarka, Arbre-a-Soie, Arkamu, Badabadam, Byclospa, Ekke, Ekkemal, Erikka, Erikku, Erukku, Jilledu, Khok, Khark, Madar, Mandara, Mandaramu, Mudar, Surya pattra, Yercum.

Description

This Ayurvedic herb, abounding in milky juice, is found in parts of India, Sri Lanka,

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Singapore, Malay Islands, and South China. It is found mainly in wastelands.

Constituents

Various principles of the Calotropis bark and sap are:

—Madar alban

—Madar fluavil

—black acid resin

—Caoutchouc (free)

—yellow bitter resins (active principles)

—Akundarin

—Calotropin

The root-bark from the older plants has a higher percentage of acrid and bitter resinous matters than that from the younger plants. Therefore, the older the plant the more active is its bark in its effects. This drug is acting like digitalis on the heart. The physiologically active substance is found in the milky juice of the plant.

Parts Used: Root, root-bark, leaves, inspissated juice and flowers.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

This herb acts like digitalis on the heart.

The root-bark: mucilaginous, bitter, alterative (when used at the rate of 3 to 10 grains thrice daily), tonic, antispasmodic, diaphoretic, purgative, expectorant, and in large doses emetic (when used at the rate of 30 to 60 grains/day).

This herb increases secretions (especially the evacuation of bile) and has a sedative action on the muscular fibers of the intestines, (especially the colon and the rectum), allaying all pain, and irritation. It is thus very useful for relieving all dysenteric symptoms. Useful for leprosy, syphilis, dysentery and elephantiasis. Also useful in the cure of epilepsy, hysteria, fits, convulsions and paralysis. It is a great remedy for syphilitic affections. It is called 'vegetable mercury' because of this reputation.

The herb is useful for fevers because of its antiperiodic and diaphoretic actions. Other uses include: bile secretion, heart diseases (used like digitalis), parasitic infection, difficult/painful urination, abdominal disorders, hemorrhoids, and edema.

Flowers: Digestive, stomachic, and tonic. When given internally in small doses, it stimulates the capillaries and acts powerfully upon the skin. Hence, it is useful for elephantiasis, and leprosy. The flowers also has beneficial effect on asthma.

Juice: Caustic, a purge for phlegm, depilatory, and the most acrid of all milky juices. It has emetic, diaphoretic, alterative and purgative properties. Milky juice is a violent purgative and gastrointestinal irritant. In India, it has been used illegally for inducing abortion or causing the death of new-born infants, by forcing it down the throat or applied locally, usually a stick smeared with the juice is pushed up into the uterus and left there until uterine contractions are induced. In some parts of India if is also used as a cattle poison.

Leaves and Branches: Anesthesia, paralysis, resolvent, toxic asthma. All parts of the plant are considered to have valuable alterative properties when taken in small doses.

Action and Uses in Ayurveda and Siddha

Indications: Arsas, gulmam, kapodaram, kandu, kushtum, vishim, vranam.

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Red Flowers: Arsas, grahi, gulmam, kaphaharm, krimi, in kushtam, madhura in raktapittam, rasam, sodam, tikta rasam.

Flowers: Aphrodisiac, in aruchi, dipanim, kasam, lagu, pachanam, swasam.

Milk: Lagu, snigdam, tikshnam, ushnam, virechanam, indication in kushtam.

Action and Uses in Unani

Aches, antheimintic, balgham, caustic, dropsy, piles, skin

Other Uses

Arka is a main ingredient of Arka Tailam, an ayurvedic herbal oil. This oil is useful in eczema and eruptive skin diseases. It relieves the pain and burning in scorpion and insect bites.

It is used by women for removing hair from parts of body. It is a useful local application for the relief of painful joints and swellings, and for ringworm of the scalp.

Dosage

Inspissated juice 1–2 grs.

Root-bark 1–5 grs

Juice of the leaves 1 to 5 drops.

Preparations: Paste or emulsion, Pills and powder of root, and leaves. Ash and fluid extract of leaves and oil.

Safety

CAUTION: THIS HERB IS POISONOUS. DO NOT USE WHILE PREGNANT. USE THIS HERB ONLY UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL.

No other information is available on its side reactions.

AKARAKARA

Name: Pellitory.

Biological Name: Anacyclus pyrethrum, Pyrethrum radix.

Other Names: Pellitory, Akarakara, Akarkara, Aquarqarha, Akkirakaram, Akkalkara, Akkarakaram, Pellitory of Spain, Pyrethre, Pyrethrum, Roman Pellitory, Spanish Camomile.

Parts Used: Root.

Active Ingredients

This herb contains an essential volatile oil and an alkaloid, pellitorin or pyrethrin. It has alkamides, lignane (including sesamine), inulin (fructosan) and tannins. Alkamides includes deca-2,4-dien acid-isobutylamide, anacycline, and dehydroanacycline. It is believed that application of this herb to the skin stimulates the nerve ends that may result in redness, and irritation accompanied by a hot, burning sensation.

Remedies For

Root of this herb is a valuable sialogogue. It is often used as a tonic to the nervous system. It is powerfully irritant. It is also used for rheumatic conditions, and to aid in digestion.

Also useful for toothaches (use as a gargle). It is also used as an insecticide. Other applications include treatment for epilepsy, paralysis, hemiplegia, and for sore throat and tonsils. Some herbalists suggest that this herb may be useful for diabetes.

Description

This herb is found in North Africa, in the Mediterranean, Himalayas, North India and Arabian countries.

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Dosage

Preparation: Powder, pills, paste, tonic.

1. *Powder*: Blow Pellitory combination herbal powder into the nose for Epilepsy.
2. *Pill*: 1 to 5 grs. of Pellitory Combination Pill is given to children for irritability of temper, wakefulness, painful dentition, diarrhea, colic and vomiting.
3. *Churna*: Take 6 grains of Akara Karabhadi Churna for impotence and chronic bowel complaints.
4. *Boil 35 grs. in Water* : It is given as drink in diabetes.

Safety

No health hazards or side effects are reported if this herb is used under the supervision of a qualified practitioner.

Overdoses may result in irritation, due to the mucus-membrane-stimulating characteristics of the alkamides found in this herb.

AKEBIA

Name: Clematis Stem.

Biological Name: Caulis akebia trifoliata, Akebia quinata, Aristolochia manchuriensis Ranunculaceae.

Other Names: Clematis stem, akebia, mutong.

Parts Used: Stem.

Remedies For

Antibiotic, antitumor, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, diuretic, galactagogue.

Drains dampness, clears heat, promotes urination, promotes menstruation and lactation, controls sleep apnea, calms irritability, and treats insomnia. Chinese herbalists use this herb to treat acute urinary tract infections, edema, and amenorrhea; rheumatic conditions; as well as to calm the mind; and to promote sleep. Recently used for tumors of the breast and digestive tract.

Dosage

3–9 grams.

Combinations

For frequent or painful urination, urinary tract infections, or mouth and tongue ulcerations: Combine 6 grams of akebia, 9 grams of bamboo leaf, and 10 grams of unprepared rehmannia.

Safety

Clematis should not be used during pregnancy and should be used with caution in patients with in deficiency.

ALDER BUCKTHORN

Name: Alder Buckthorn.

Biological Name: Rhamnus frangula Rhamnaceae.

Other Names: Alder buckthorn, alder dogwood, arrowwood, black alder dogwood, black alder tree, black dogwood, European black alder, European buckthorn, Persian berries.

Parts Used: Bark.

Remedies For

Purgative: The purgative action of buckthorn is said to be similar to that of rhubarb. It works without irritating the system and can be used for all conditions causing or associated with constipation, including

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liver and gallbladder problems. It produces no constipative backlash after purgation as some other remedies do, neither does it become less effective with repeated use. With medical approval, a mixture of equal parts buckthorn, senna leaves, milfoil, and witch-grass root may be used during this time. Buckthorn tea is also said to be good for lead colic, obesity, dropsy, and hemorrhoids.

Description

Buckthorn as a shrub may grow to 20 feet high, as a tree to 25 feet, in swamps and damp places of the northern and northeastern U.S. as well as Europe. The spreading, thornless branches have green bark when young, turning to brownish-gray when older. The light olive-green leaves are alternate, obovate, slightly toothed or entire, and glabrous. The five-petaled, green flowers grow in axillary clusters, 2 to 6 flowers per axii. The fruit is a three-seeded berry-like drupe that turns from green through red to purplish-black and has a greenish-brown pulp.

Dosage

The best bark Is from branches that are 3 to 4 years old. Age the bark for at least a year before using; after three years it begins to weaken.

Decoction: Use 1 tsp. bark with 1/2 cup cold water. Bring to a boil. Drink before going to bed. Use no more than 1/2 oz. of bark per day.

Cold Extract: Use 1 tsp. bark with 1/2 cup cold water. Let stand for 12 hours. Drink in the evening.

Tincture: A dose is from 5 to 20 drops.

Safety

CAUTION: FRESH BARK AND UNRIPE FRUIT CAN CAUSE SYMPTOMS OF POISONING. STORAGE FOR A YEAR OR HEATING TO 212°F WILL RENDER THE BARK SAFE. DO NOT TAKE THIS HERB IF YOU ARE PREGNANT.

ALFALFA

Name: Alfalfa.

Biological Name: Medicago sativa Leguminosae (beans and peas).

Other Names: Alfalfa, Chilean Clover, Buffalo Grass, Father of All Foods (Al-fal-fa), Buffalo herb, lucerne, purple medic.

Parts Used: Leaves.

Active Compounds: Upto 50% protein, has good quantity of beta carotene, chlorophyll and octacosanol. Other ingredients are: saponins, sterols, flavonoids, coumarins, alkaloids, acids, vitamins (A, B_1, B_6, B_{12}, C, D, E, K, niacin, pantothenic acid, biotin, folic acid), amino acids, sugars, minerals (Ca, K, P, Mg, Fe, Zn, Cu), trace elements and other nutrients.

History

Chinese used it stimulate appetite and treat digestive problems, particularly ulcers Ancient Indian Ayurvedic physicians used Alfalfa to treat ulcers, arthritis pains and fluid retention Early Americans used alfalfa to treat arthritis, boils, cancer, scurvy, and urinary and bowel problems. Pioneer women used it to aid menstruation.

Remedies For

Alterative, diuretic, antipyretic, hemostatic.

—May reduce cholesterol

—Help prevent Heart disease

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—Help prevent some strokes

Studies done at University of California at Davis found that alfalfa extracts with a lot of manganese definitely improved the condition of a diabetic who failed to respond to insulin.

Clinical nutritionists have clearly demonstrated that alfalfa meal helped monkeys, who was fed food rich in cholesterol, from getting atherosclerosis. It was also found to reduce the serum cholesterol levels. Alfalfa had been used traditionally for treating infections resulting from surgical incisions, bed sores and inner ear problems.

Description

Alfalfa is a perennial herb found on the edges of fields. It is widely cultivated by farmers for livestock feed. It grows to a height of a foot or more. The erect, smooth stem grows from an elongated taproot.

The flowers are blue to purple during the summer months. It produces a characteristic spirally coiled seed pods. Some Herbalists believe that alfalfa is the "Big Daddy of 'em all" in terms of nutritional value. The plant is so rich in Calcium that the ashes of its leaves are almost 99% pure Calcium.

Dosage

When high cholesterol or diabetes is the problem, take 2 capsules of good quality alfalfa powder with every meal. For treating infections, make fresh juice from raw alfalfa sprouts whipped in a blender. Take 4–6 oz of this juice orally or apply to the site of infection.

Alisma

Name: Alisma.

Biological Name: Alismatis orientalis Alismataceae.

Other Names: Alisma, water plantain rhizome, ze xie.

Parts Used: Rhizome.

Remedies For

Diuretic, antihypertensive, lowers blood sugar, antibacterial. This herb is used for edema, urinary dysfunction, and diarrhea.

Dosage

6–12 grams.

Safety

Do not use alisma when there are excretions caused by kidney yang deficiency or damp cold conditions, such as seminal emission or vaginal discharge.

Alkanet, Bugloss

Name: Alkanet.

Biological Name: Anchusa officinalis Boraginaceae, Borage family.

Other Names: Alkanet, Bugloss, Common alkanet.

Remedies For

Two Uses are Often Suggested: Expectorant (for bringing up phlegm). Emollient (for soothing and softening the skin). No evidence was found by the scientists to the expectorant function. Its function as an emollient is yet to be evaluated.

Description

This is a biennial herb with coarsely hairy stems and leaves. It grows about 1–3 feet. It

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is normally found in waste places and road sides. Dainty purplish blue flowers appear late May-October.

Safety

Alkanet may cause cancer if taken internally over a long period of time.

All Heal

Name: Prune lla.

Biological Name: Prunellae vulgaris Labiatae.

Other Names: Prunella, Xia ku cao, self heal, all heal.

Parts Used: Flower spike.

Remedies For

Antipyretic, diuretic, anti-inflammatory antihypertensive vasodilator. Prunella is used for painful, red, and/or swollen eyes often associated with hypertension. It is also very effective for softening and resolving swollen lymph glands, goiter, breast lumps, cancer and tumors.

Description

Grows both in the northwestern and north-eastern parts of North America.

Dosage

9–15 grams.

Safety

Do not use if you have a weak stomach or spleen associated with coldness.

All-Heal

Name: Valerian.

Biological Name: Valeriana officianalis.

Other Names: English valerian, German valerian, great wild valerian, Vermont valerian, vandal root, all-heal, setwall, American English valerian, Garden valerian, phu, Valerian.

Parts Used: Root and rhizome.

Active Compounds

Valerian root contains many different constituents, including essential oils that appear to contribute to the sedating properties of the herb. Central nervous system sedation is regulated by receptors in the brain known as GABA-A receptors. Valerian may weakly bind to these receptors to exert a sedating effect.

History

The Greek physician Dioscorides recommended valerian for a host of medical problems, including digestive problems, nausea, liver problems, and even urinary tract disorders. Use of valerian for insomnia and nervous conditions has been common for many centuries. By eighteenth century, it was an accepted sedative and was also used for nervous disorders associated with a restless digestive tract. Valerian is the most widely used sedative in Europe, where over one hundred valerian preparations are sold in pharmacies. Valerian is growing in popularity throughout the world because of its reputation for relieving anxiety and insomnia. It has been used for nervousness and insomnia for thousands of years in Ayurvedic medicine in India and in traditional Chinese medicine. Valerian was a very popular sleep sedative in the United States until it was displaced by synthetic drugs after World War II.

Remedies For

—Insomnia

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—Blood pressure

—Anticonvulsant—treatment of epilepsy.

Clinical studies have shown that people taking valerian had shown significantly improved sleep quality without morning grogginess. Some researchers have compared valerian to benzodiazepines such as Valium. However, valerian is a much milder and safer sedative. Unlike valium, valerian is not addictive or does not promote dependency. Valerian's sedative effect is not significantly exaggerated by alcohol and barbiturates unlike valium. Recommended dosage of valerian does not cause morning grogginess. Valerian is not linked to any birth defects, unlike valium.

Blood Pressure: Animal studies have shown that valerian reduces blood pressure. Valerian is shown to have some anti-tumor effects similar to that of nitrogen mustard. It may play a role in the treatment of cancer. Valerian is shown exhibit anticonvulsant effects that may help in the treatment of epilepsy.

Historical Uses: Aromatic, stimulant, tonic, anodyne, antispasmodic, nervine, emmenagogue. Excellent nerve tonic, very quiet and soothing.

Useful in Hysteria: Will promote menstruation when taken hot. Useful in colic, low fevers, to break up colds, and also for gravel in the bladder. Healing for stomach ulcers and very good for prevention of fermentation and gas. The tea is very healing when applied to sores and pimples externally, and must also be taken internally at the same time. Relieves palpitation of the heart.

Clinical Trials and Proof of Efficacy: A 1996 study by Gerhard and associates compared valerian to benzodiazepines and placebo in the treatment of insomnia. Side effects were reported by 50 percent of the subjects in the benzodiazepine-treated group but only 10 percent of the subjects treated with valerian. Valerian and benzodiazepines were similarly effective for alleviating insomnia. Clinical studies on the use of valerian in insomnia have shown that valerian extract, standardized to 0.8-percent valeric acid, may be effective at a dose of 300 up to 900 mg one hour before bedtime. Valerian, however, does not produce as dramatic a sedative effect as a benzodiazepine sleeping pill. The use of valerian extract can take two to three weeks before significant benefits in sleep are achieved. It may not be an appropriate medicine for acute insomnia because of this delayed onset of action. Once valerian extract takes effect, it does promote natural sleep without any risk of dependence. Valerian extract at a dose of 50 to 100 mg taken two or three times daily has been shown to relieve performance anxiety and the stress of driving in heavy traffic. Larger doses of valerian extract may be necessary for patients who have been using benzodiazepine prescriptions for anxiety.

Description

Valerian grows wild all over Europe. But most valerian used for medicinal extracts is cultivated.

Valerian is a perennial that reaches about 5 feet. Its medicinal roots consist of long, cylindrical fibers issuing from its rhizome. Its stem is erect, grooved, and hollow. Valerian leaves are fernlike. Tiny flowers—white, pink, or lavender-develop in umbrella-like clusters and bloom from late spring through

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summer. When dried valerian roots have an unpleasant odor, like that of 'dirty socks'.

Dosage

Many people take 300–500 mg of valerian root herbal extract in capsules or tablets one hour before bedtime for insomnia. As an alcohol-based tincture, 5 ml can be taken before bedtime.

Combination products with lemon balm, hops, passion flower and scullcap can also be used.

Children 6–12 yrs old respond to half of the adult dosage.

Safety

Valerian has a long history of exceptional safety, which has been confirmed by clinical studies. In 1995 a woman in Utah attempted suicide by taking about twenty times the recommended dose. She was discharged from the hospital the next day, undamaged. While taking valerian, caution should be used when driving or operating machinery. Unlike Valium-like drugs, valerian is not associated with dependence or addiction. While valerian is not synergistic with alcohol, it is best to be cautious in this regard. Sedatives should never be combined with alcohol. Although no cases of drug interactions have been reported, animal studies have demonstrated that valerian can potentiate the effect of phenobarbital and benzodiazepines. It can also aid in the withdrawal of benzodiazepine tranquilizers and sleeping pills, but this should only be done under a doctor's supervision.

There are no known contraindications to using valerian during pregnancy or lactation. Valerian should not be used nightly for longer than six months. Poisoning may result if large amount of the tea are taken for more than 2 to 3 weeks. Do not boil the root. Consuming large amounts of valerian may cause headache, giddiness, blurred vision, restlessness, nausea. And morning grogginess. FDA lists valerian as generally safe. Use only in consultation with a doctor if you are using valerian for therapeutic purposes. If you experience any side effects, stop the use immediately.

Aloe Vera

Name: Aloe Vera.

Biological Name(s): Aloe barbadensis, Aloe Indica, Aloe Barbados, Aloe Vera, Lily family, Liliaceae.

Other Names: Aloe, Aloe Vera, Indian Alces, Kumari, Ghirita, Gawarpaltra, Barbados aloe, Curacao aloe, Lu hui.

Description

Aloe is a perennial succulent native to East and South Africa. It is cultivated in the West Indies and other tropical countries. The tissue in the center of the aloe leaf contains a gel which yields aloe gel or aloe vera gel. Aloe is believed to have been used to preserve body of Jesus Christ.

Parts Used: Leaf gel and sap. Aloin Extract, dried juice of leaves and pulp root.

Active Compounds: Aloin, obtained from the gel in the leaf. Responsible for the plant's healing properties.

Remedies For

Alterative, bitter tonic, rejuvenative, emmenagogue, purgative, emollient, vulnerary.

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When applied externally, aloe vera restores skin tissues and may aid the healing of burns and sores. It can also be used on blemishes and dandruff. Used cosmetically, Aloe vera softens the skin. Aloe vera is also taken internally for stomach disorders. Dried aloe latex, a substance derived from the leaf, is a strong laxative. Modern doctors have used aloe for X-ray burns, sunburn, chemical burns, first degree burns, traumatized tissue, decibitus ulcers or bedsores, skin inflammation, stomach ulcers, herpes simplex, peridontal surgery, insect bites and stings, irritating plant stings, and other minor skin manifestations. Aloe had shown outstanding results in treating facial edema (swelling). When used as a mouth rinse, it was effective for cold spores and lockjaw.

Applications

—amenorrhea
—asthma
—inflamed or diseased breasts
—burns
—bursitis
—colds
—colic
—conjunctivitis
—constipation
—coughs
—dys-menorrhea
—dysentery with bloody stools
—ear infections
—eye problems
—fat and sugar metabolism
—fever
—gonorrhea
—heart pain
—hemorrhoids
—hepatitis
—herpes
—infant pneumonia
—insomnia
—Intestinal worms
—jaundice
—kidney disorders
—enlarged liver
—menopause
—rheumatism
—skin inflammations
—skin rashes
—sores
—sore throat
—spleen, enlarged
—toothache
—TB and other lung diseases
—tumors
—ulcers, chronic
—vaginitis
—venereal diseases

Dosage

Aloe vera comes in a number of forms: natural gel, prepared ointment, salve or lotion, liquid drink concentrate and encapsulated powder. Can be used externally or taken internally depending on conditions. For minor cuts and inflammation, apply the gel from the leaf directly on the wound. For larger inflammations etc. use a concentrated ointment, salve or lotion. For internal use, aloe comes as a drink concentrate. Dilute it to 1 oz = 1 quart prior to consuming.

Safety

In the USA, the leaf gel is generally recognized as safe as a food.

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Canada: approved as an over-the counter laxative

France: Traditional medicine.

Germany: Commission E approved as an over-the-counter drug

Japan: Japanese pharmacopoeia

U.K. : British pharmacopoeia.

Do not use if you are pregnant, menstruating, or by those with cold, weak spleen and stomach.

Alstonia Bark

Latin Name: Alstonia constricta.

Other Names: Australian Fever Bush, Australian Quinine, Devil Tree, Dita Bark, Fever Bark, Pali-mara.

A Remedy For

Although there's no formal evidence of its effectiveness, Alstonia bark is sometimes taken to reduce fever. In the Far East, it is used for diarrhea and malaria. It has also been employed as a uterine stimulant and as a remedy for rheumatism.

What It Is; Why It Works

Alstonia Bark contains trace amounts of reserpine—an active ingredient in such high blood pressure medications as Diupres and Hydropres—but in quantities too small to be of any practical value. Aside from this slight antihypertensive effect, the bark is also said to combat spasms and relieve fever. A 40-foot evergreen tree native to Australia, Alstonia takes its name from a Professor Alston who taught botany in Edinburgh. At one point, some experts considered Alstonia Bark better than quinine for treating malaria, but the herb has since fallen into disuse.

Avoid If...

Reserpine should be avoided during pregnancy, and by those with depression, stomach ulcers, or ulcerative colitis. Since Alstonia Bark contains a small amount of reserpine, you may wish to avoid it under these circumstances.

Special Cautions

Side effects are a slight possibility, due primarily to Alstonia's reserpine content. They could include nasal congestion, depression, fatigue, impotence, and slowed reaction time. Use caution when handling machinery or driving.

Possible Drug Interactions

Reserpine should not be combined with monoamine oxidase inhibitors such as Nardil or Parnate, alcohol and barbiturates, digitalis-based drugs such as Lanoxin, or quinidine products such as Quinaglute and Quinidex, levodopa (Sinemet), and many common flu remedies and appetite suppressants. You may wish to take similar precautions with Alstonia Bark. Special Information If You Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding. Reserpine should be avoided during pregnancy or when breastfeeding. Due to its reserpine content, you should avoid Alstonia as well.

How to Prepare

Alstonia Bark may be used in the form of a powder, liquid extract, alcohol solution (tincture), or tea.

Typical Dosage

Tincture: 2 to 4 milliliters.

Liquid Extract: 4 to 8 milliliters.

Tea: 15 to 20 milliliters (3 to 4 teaspoonfuls).

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Overdosage

Symptoms of reserpine overdose include mental depression, heavy sedation, and a severe drop in blood pressure. If you suspect an overdose, seek medical attention immediately.

ALTHEA

Name: Marshmallow.

Biological Name: Althaea officinalis Malvaceae.

Other Names: Marshmallow, althea, sweet weed, mallards, guimauve, mortification plant, schloss tea, wymote

Parts Used: Root and leaf.

Active Compounds

In the Root: Mucilage, l8–35%; consisting of a number of polysaccharides; one is composed of L-rhamnose, D-galactose, D-galacturonic acid and D-glucuronic acid in the ratio 3 : 2 : 3 : 3, another a highly branched L-arabifurranan, another a trisaccharide structural unit and one with a high proportion of uronic acid units.

Miscellaneous; about 35% pectin, 1–2% asparagine, tannins.

In the Leaves: Mucilage; including a low molecular weight D-glucan. Flavanoids such a kaempferol, quercitin and diosmetin glucosides. Scopoletin, a coumarin Polyphenolic acids, including syringic, caffeic, salicyclic, vanillic, p-coumaric etc.

History

Valuable and handsome herb with a long tradition of use in medicine and cosmetics, and as a vegetable and confection. Cultivated by the Romans.

Remedies For

Demulcent, emmolient, diuretic, anti-inflammatory, expectorant, mucilaginous. Its abundance of mucilage makes Marshmallow an excellent demulcent that is indicated wherever such an action is called for. The roots have been used for the digestive system whilst the leaves are used for the urinary system and lungs. All inflammatory conditions of the G-I tract will benefit from its use, *e.g.*, inflammations of the mouth, gastritis, peptic ulceration, colitis etc.. The leaves help in cystitis, urethritis and urinary gravel as well as bronchitis, respiratory catarrh, irritating coughs. Externally the herb is often used in drawing ointments for abscesses and boils or as an emollient for varicose veins and ulcers.

Combinations: As one of the most effective and safest demulcents, it may be used in any situation where this action is appropriate.

Description

Native of Europe; cultivated in the USA. Tough-rooted herbaceous perennial, 4 ft. Velvety stems and leaves; white or pink flowers in leaf axils in late summer. Found in damp, often saline places.

Dosage

1–4 ml of the tincture three times a day. A cold infusion of the roots should be made with 2–4 gms. to a cup of cold water and left to infuse over night.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

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ALUMROOT

Name: American Cranesbill.

Biological Name: Geranium maculatum Geraniaceae.

Other Names: American Cranesbill, Alumroot, Storksbill, Wild Geranium.

Parts Used: The rhizome.

Active Compounds: Tannins including gallic acid, with the level being highest just before flowering.

Remedies For

Astringent, anti—haemorrhagic, anti-inflammatory, vulnerary. American Cranesbill is an effective astringent used in diarrhea, dysentery and hemorrhoids. When bleeding accompanies duodenal or gastric ulceration, this remedy is used in combination with other relevant herbs. Where blood is lost in the feces, this herb will help, though careful diagnosis is vital. It may be used where excessive blood loss during menstruation (menorrhagia) or a uterine hemorrhage (metrorrhagia) occur. As a douche it can be used in leucorrhoea.

Combinations: In peptic ulcers it may be used with Meadowsweet, Comfrey, Marshmallow or Agrimony. In leucorrhoea it can be combined with Beth Root.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the rhizome in a cup of cold water and bring to boiling. Let simmer for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 2–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

AMALAKI

Name: Indian Gooseberry.

Biological Name: Emblica officinalis; Euphorbiaceae family.

Other Names: Indian Gooseberry, Emblic myrobalan, Amla, Amalaki.

Parts Used: Fresh Fruit, Dried fruit, the nut or seed, leaves, root, bark and flowers. Ripe fruits used generally fresh, dry also used.

Description

The bark of Amla is gray in color and peals in irregular patches. Its feathery leaves, which smell like lemon, are of linear oblong shape and size 10 to 12 mm length and 3 to 6 mm width. Its flowers are monoecioius having greenish yellow color. They grow in auxiliary clusters and start appearing in the beginning of spring season.

Amla fruit, depressed globose with six vertical furrows, start developing by the middle of spring and the fruit ripen towards beginning of autumn. The color of the fruit is pale yellow.

Amla has been regarded as a sacred tree in India. The tree was worshipped as Mother Earth and is believed to nurture humankind because the fruits are very nourishing. The leaves, fruit and flowers are used in worship in India. In Himachal Pradesh the tree is worshipped in Kartik as propitious and chaste.

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Active Ingredients

The active ingredient that has significant pharma-cological action in amla is designated by Indian scientists as 'phyllemblin'. The other ingredients present are gallic acid, tannins, pectin, and ascorbic acid (Vitamin C).

It is a tonic, has a haematinic and lipalytic function. It is one of the strongest rejuvenatives in Indian pharmacopoeia. It contains 30 times the amount of Vitamin C found in oranges.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Fresh fruit is refrigerant, diuretic and laxative. Green fruit is exceedingly acid. Fruit is also carminative and stomachic. Dried fruit is sour and astringent. Flowers are cooling and aperient. Bark is astringent. The herb is also aphrodisiac, hemostatic, nutritive tonic, rejuvenative (for Pitta). It increases red blood cell count. It is one of the highest natural source of Vitamin C (3,000 mg per fruit) Amla fruit paste is a major ingredient of Chavyanprash, a popular Ayurvedic tonic. Amla is known as amritphala in Sanskrit, which literally means the fruit of heaven or nectar fruit. It is so called because it is rich in many desirable properties. It was described in a 7th century Ayurvedic medical text. According to several scholars, the sage Chyawan is reputed to have restored his vitality with this fruit.

Benefits of Emblica Officinalis

Enhances production of Red Blood Cells. Strengthens teeth, hair and nails.

Regulates Blood Sugar and prevents lipid peroxidation in cell membranes.

Very Powerful anti-inflammatory herb. Useful in hemorrhoids, gastritis and colitis.

Useful in eye problems especially in inflammations. Improves nearsightedness. Also useful for cataracts.

Prevents premature greying of hair and makes them strong and free from dandruff. Increases immunity in the body. Protects against heart and nervous disorders.

Action & Uses in Ayurveda and Siddha.

Rasa, all except kavana, kashayam dominates, seetha veeryam, mathura vipakam, tridosha, haram, rasayanam, increases sukram.

Used For: Prameham, rakta-pittam, vata-raktam, giddiness, vertigo.

Externally Used For: Mental disorders in paste and tailam to head. 'Tara-dravam'.

Action & Uses in Unani

Refrigerant, heart-tonic, tonic to brain, prevents vicious humours in stomach and intestines. Used in chronic diarrhea, in the convalescent stage of typhoid and other fevers.

Conditions for which Indian Gooseberry is Useful For:

—acidity
—anemia
—biliousness
—bleeding, internal
—colitis
—constipation
—diabetes
—eye and lung inflammations, improve eyesight
—fever
—gastritis

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—G.I. disorders
—gout
—gum bleeding (to stop)
—hair (premature gray/balding)
—heart complaints
—hepatitis
—hemorrhoids
—indigestion
—intestines, cleanses
—liver weakness
—mental disorders. The fruit is believed to a calming effect on the emotions.
—osteoporosis
—painful urination
—palpitation
—pulmonary tuberculosis
—spleen weakness
—stomach and colon inflammation
—to rebuild blood, bones, cells, and tissues
—ulcerations
—urinary problems
—vertigo
—worms

Dosage and Uses

Amla is used in the following forms: Decoction and Infusion of leaves and seeds; liquor, essential oil; confection; powder; paste and pickles. An astringent extract equal to catechu is prepared from the root by decoction and evaporation.

As a Vermifuge: Juice of the fruit with honey is used. The recommended dose is from 1 to 3 drachms.

To Stimulate Appetite: Use pickles and preserves made from the green fruits. For irritability of the bladder, in retention of urine and to the forehead in cephalalgia.

Use a paste of the fruit alone or with Nelumbium speciosum, Saffron and rose water. Apply it over the affected region.

As a Febrifuge and in Diabetes

Use an infusion of the seeds. For hiccup and for painful respiration.

Use juice or extract of the fruit combined with honey and pipli.

For hemorrhage, diarrhea and dysentery.

Use dried fruit. A decoction prepared from the fruit combined with T. chebula and T. belerica is useful in chronic dysentery and biliousness, in doses of 1 oz. once or twice daily.

For diarrhea of children, a compound powder of the emblic seed, Chitrak root, chebulic myrobalan, pipli and palelone is given in suitable doses, according to age, in warm water twice daily, morning and at bed time.

Tender shoots given in butter-milk cure indigestion and diarrhea; green fresh leaves combined with curds have a similar effect.

Leaves are used as infusion with fenugreek seeds in chronic dysentery and as a bitter tonic.

Soak one tola of the seeds in a tinned vessel during the night. Grind it. Add cow's milk and take. This is a good remedy for biliousness.

For anemia, jaundice and dyspepsia.

Use dried fruit with iron. A fermented liquor prepared from the root is used in jaundice, dyspepsia, cough, etc.

Take 20 to 40 grains of Dhatri Leha for anemia, jaundice and dyspepsia.

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Dhatri Arista is used for jaundice, dyspepsia, indigestion, and cough.

For burning in the vagina. A mixture of the fruit juice and sugar is prescribed as a remedy for burning in the vagina. Juice of the bark combined with honey and turmeric is a remedy for gonorrhea.

To stop nausea and vomiting.

A powder of the emblic seed and red sandalwood is given with honey to stop for bleeding of the nose.

Seed fried in ghee and ground in conjee is applied as Lep to the forehead to stop bleeding from the nose for scabies or itch.

Apply the seed burnt, powdered and mixed in oil for scabies or itch.

As a restorative invigorator make a powder from an equal quantity of emblic seed and root of Withania somnifera. Add ghee and honey. Mix well. This is a restorative invigorator, especially in winter days. Combine half a drachm each of emblic seed and gokhru. Grind and make them into a powder. Mix with 15 grains of essence of Gulancha. Give this in early morning with ghee and sugar. This is a nutrient tonic.

Safety

CAUTION: MAY CAUSE ACUTE DIARRHEA IN PITTA DOSHAS. NO OTHER INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE.

AMARANTH

Name: Amaranth.

Biological Name: Amaranthus hypochondriacus, Amaranthus cruentus.

Other Names: Amaranth, Hsien, lady bleeding, lovely bleeding, pilewort, prince's feather, red cockscomb, spleen amaranth.

Parts Used: Seeds and leaves.

History: It is believed that amaranth was brought to America by those first migrants from the Tower of Babel, who have traveled eastward across China and launched their barges on the Pacific, eventually reaching Mexico around 2000 B.C. Chinese had been using this herb for centuries as a remedy for profuse menstruation.

Remedies

As an Astringent: Amaranth seed and leaves have been used effectively as an astringent for stopping diarrhea, bloody stools and urine, and excessive menstruation. It is an excellent wash for skin problems such as acne and eczema to psoriasis and hives. It is used as a douche for vaginal discharges; as a mouthwash for sore mouths, gums, teeth and throat and as an enema for colon inflammation and rectal sores.

Description

Amaranth is a fruit that comes from the same family as the edible weed, lamb's quarter. It looks like sesame seed. It has a pleasant, nutty flavor and can be popped like corn or steamed or flattened into a flake.

Dosage

Make an amaranth tea as follows. Bring 3 cups of water to a rolling boil, add 2 tsp of seeds. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes on low heat. Remove from heat and add 1 tsp of leaves, if available or let it steep for 30 minutes. Drink 2 cups of this tea daily for internal problems.

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AMBER

Name: St. John's Wort.

Biological Name: Hypericum Perforatum.

Other Names: Johnswort, Amber, Touch-and-heal, Goat weed, Hardhay, Klamath Weed, Rosin Rose, Hypericum, Tipton weed, St. John's Wort.

Parts Used: Tops and flowers.

Active Compounds

St. John's Wort has a complex and diverse chemical make-up. Hypericin and pseudohypericin are believed to have antidepressive and antiviral properties. Other constituents, such as xanthones and flavonoids, may also contribute to the medicinal actions of St. John's Wort. The following are the active constituents:

Essential oil, containing caryophyllene, methyl-2-octane, n-nonane, n-octanal, n-decanal, a- and b-pinene, and traces of limonene and myrcene.

Hypericins, prenylated phloroglucin derivatives; hypericin, pseudohypericin and hyperforin.

Miscellaneous: Flavonoids, () and (-) - epicatechin.

Hypericum extract contains numerous active compounds that together create the antidepressant and antianxiety effects. Hypericum is the first known substance to enhance three key neurotransmitters-serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine. Preliminary research suggests that St. John's Wort also lowers levels of the stress hormone cortisol and enhances the activity of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), a naturally occurring tranquilizer in the brain. It is a very mild, clinically insignificant monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitor.

The mechanism by which St. John's Wort acts as an antidepressant is not fully understood. Early research indicated that this herb mildly inhibits the enzyme monoamine oxidase (MAO). MAO is responsible for the breakdown of two brain chemicals - serotonin and norepinephrine. By inhibiting MAO and increasing norepinephrine, St. John's Wort may exert a mild antidepressive action. The antidepressant or mood elevating effects of St. John's Wort were originally thought to be due solely to hypericin, but hypericin does not act alone. St. John's Wort relies on the complex interplay of many constituents such as xanthones and flavonoids for its antidepressant actions. St. John's Wort may also block the receptors that bind serotonin.

History

Ancient Greeks believed that the fragrance of St. John's Wort would cause the evil spirits to fly away. The plant was given magical powers. In ancient Greece, the herb was used to treat many ailments, including sciatica and poisonous reptile bites. In Europe it was used for the topical treatment of wounds and burns. It is also a folk remedy for kidney and lung ailments as well as depression.

Remedies For: Anxiety.

Depression

—Inflammation of the skin

—Blunt Injuries

—Wounds and Burns

—Recurrent Ear infection

—Vitiligo

—Being tested for AIDS

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Antispasmodic, astringent, expectorant, nervine, vulnerary, anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial. Hypericum was recommended by Hippocrates for "nervous unrest." It has a 2400-year history of folk use for anxiety; sleep disturbances, and worry. Modern medical research has shown that Hypericum can be as effective as prescription antidepressants for mild to moderate depression. However, unlike prescription antidepressants, Hypericum's side effects are few and mild. The standardized extract of St. John's Wort (containing 0.14 percent hypericin) has significant support in the treatment of mild to moderate depression. The official German Commission E monograph for St. John's Wort lists psychovegetative disturbances, depressive states, fear, and nervous disturbances as clinical indications for the extract. Clinical studies have shown significant improvement in symptoms of anxiety, apathy, hypersomnia, and insomnia, anorexia, psychomotor retardation, depression feelings of worthlessness. Clinical double blind studies indicated that St. John's Wort extract (0.3% hypericin) at a dosage of 300 milligrams three times daily is as effective in relieving symptoms of depression as standard antidepressants but is much better tolerated with fewer side effects.

Hypericum is now the number one antidepressant, natural or synthetic, prescribed by German physicians. In Germany, Hypericum accounts for over 50 percent of the antidepressant market, while Prozac is down to 2 percent.

In addition to Hypericum's mood-elevating properties, Germany's Commission E has approved this herb for the treatment of anxiety and sleep disorders. In two clinical studies, Hypericum demonstrated anti-anxiety effects comparable to those of Valium (diazepam). Yet Hypericum is not addictive and does not impair cognitive functions. Taken internally, St. Johns Wort has a sedative and pain reducing effect, which gives it a place in the treatment of neuralgia, anxiety, tension and similar problems. It is especially regarded as an herb to use where there are menopausal changes triggering irritability and anxiety. In addition to neuralgic pain, it will ease fibrositis, sciatica and rheumatic pain.

Externally it is a valuable healing and anti-inflammatory remedy. As a lotion it will speed the healing of wounds and bruises, varicose veins and mild burns. The oil is especially useful for the healing of sunburn.

The calming properties of St. John's Wort have been useful in treating bedwetting, insomnia, and other nervous conditions, as well as some form of melancholy. An oil extract of the herb can be taken for stomach ache, colic, intestinal problems, and as an expectorant for the congestion in the lungs. A tea made from the flowers is good for anemia, headache, insomnia, jaundice, chest congestion, and catarrh. A tea made from the herb has been used for uterine cramping and menstrual difficulties. The oil extract also make a good external application for burns, wounds, sores, bruises, and other skin problems. St. John's Wort is also being tested as an AIDS drug. There are evidence of its antiviral actions. Anecdotal reports have claimed hypericin is beneficial for persons with HIV virus. There are also reports that hypericin extract works synergistically with

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AZT against HIV. Further clinical research is in progress in this area.

Clinical Trials and Proof of Efficacy: Dr. Klaus Linde and colleagues analyzed the data from 1008 patients. The results showed that Hypericum extracts were indeed more effective than placebo in the treatment of mild to moderately severe depression. In addition, six comparison studies found that Hypericum was as effective as synthetic antidepressants but with fewer side effects. These studies reported that 10.8 percent of the patients had side effects with Hypericum (gastrointestinal irritation, dizziness, dry mouth, and a few mild allergic reactions), while 35.9 percent reported side effects from prescription antidepressants. Less than 5 percent of people stop taking Hypericum because of side effects.

In a major study by Drs. Woelk *et al.*, 3250 patients were treated with 300 mg Hypericum extract three times daily by 633 physicians. Eight typical complaints heard in general practice were recorded: depression, gastrointestinal symptoms, restlessness, difficulty initiating sleep, difficulty falling asleep, headaches, cardiac symptoms, and sweating. About 80 percent of the patients felt improved after four weeks, as measured by medical and patient evaluations. Side effects were seen in only 2.4 percent of subjects.

In a 1997 randomized, double- blind study by Dr. Vorbach and colleagues published in Pharmacopsychiatry, 209 patients with severe, recurrent depression (but with no psychotic or delusional symptoms) were treated for six weeks with 600 mg of Hypericum extract (standardized to 0.3 percent hypericin) three times a day. This high-dose treatment (1800 mg daily of Hypericum is double the usual dqsage) proved equal to treatment with a full dose of Tofranil (imipramine) (50 mg three times daily), but even at this higher dosage Hypericum showed considerably less side effects. Caution: Do not take such high doses of St. John's Wort daily without intensive medical supervision.

Description

It is an erect perennial herb that grows up to 32 inches tall and has a somewhat woody base. Commonly found in dry, gravelly soils, fields and sunny places in many parts of the world, including eastern North America and the Pacific coast. A woody branched root produces many round stems which put out runners from the base. The opposite, oblong to linear leaves are covered with transparent oil glands that look like holes. Flat topped cymes of yellow flowers, whose petals are dotted with black along the margins, appear from June to September. The fruit is a three celled capsule containing small, dark brown seeds. The whole plant has turpentine-like odor.

Dosage

The best preparation to use appears to be the St. John's Wort extract standardized to contain 0.3% hypericin. The recommended dosage of this extract as an antidepressant is 300 mg three times per day. Each dose should be taken with meals. Many people take 500 mg per day of herbal extract, tablets or capsules of St. John's Wort standardized to contain 0.2% hypericin. Higher intakes of St. John's Wort extract, such as 900 mg per day, may be used in some instances. St. John's Wort should be taken close to meals. Assess the effectiveness of the herb

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after 4 to 6 weeks of starting the herbal treatment.

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

National Institutes of Health is studying the dosage requirements of St. John's Wort and its effectiveness.

Safety

Hypericum should not be combined with a MAO inhibitor antidepressant such as Nardil (phenelzine) or Parnate (tranylcypromine). This combination can produce a dangerous rise in blood pressure or hypertensive crisis, along with severe anxiety, fever, muscle tension, and confusion. After stopping a MAO inhibitor, one should wait at least four weeks before taking other antidepressants, including Hypericum.

There are some recent reports that suggest that St. John's Wort may interfere with medications given during organ transplant (such as kidney and liver.) Do not take this herb if you have undergone or plan to undergo a transplant operation.

Avoid foods and medications that are known to interact negatively with MAO-inhibiting drugs. Tyramine containing foods (red wine, cheese, beer, yeast, and pickled herring) and drugs such as L-dopa and 5-hydoxytryptophan should be avoided. St. John's Wort should not be used at the same time as prescription antidepressants. Do not use St. John's Wort during pregnancy or lactation.

St. John's Wort makes the skin more light sensitive. Persons with fair skin should avoid exposure to strong sunlight and other sources of ultraviolet light, such as tanning beds. These individuals may suffer a dermatitis, severe burning, and possibly blistering of the skin. The severity of these effects will depend on the amount of the plant consumed and the length of exposure to sunlight. Some experts suggest that all individuals avoid sunlight when using hypericin, especially when taking large quantities.

Saint John's Wort has a good safety record over centuries of folk medicine. In contrast to synthetic antidepressants, there have been no reports of Hypericum-related deaths. Drug monitoring studies on over 7000 patients and twenty-seven double-blind research studies confirm its safety. The extensive use of Hypericum by millions of people has not resulted in reports of serious side effects.

American Bayberry

Name: Bayberry.

Biological Name: Myrica cerifera, Myricaceae.

Other Names: Bayberry, American bayberry, American vegetable tallow tree, bayberry wax tree, myrtle, wax myrtle, candleberry, candleberry myrtle, tallow shrub, American vegetable wax, vegetable tallow, waxberry.

Parts Used: Root bark, leaves, flowers.

Active Compounds: Triterpenes, including taraxerol, taraxerone and myricadiol Flavonoids such as myricitrin.

Miscellaneous: Tannins, phenols, resins and gums.

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History

The early American colonists found the bayberry tree growing throughout the East, but they used it to make fragrant candles rather than medicines. Initially bayberry was used medicinally only in the South, where the Choctaw Indians boiled the leaves and drank the decoction as a treatment for fever. Later, Louisiana settlers adopted the plant and drank bayberry wax in hot water for the most violent cases of dysentery.

During the early 19th century, bayberry was popularized by Samuel A. Thomson, a New England herbalist. He touted it for producing "heat" within the body. Thomson recommended bayberry for colds, flu, and other infectious diseases in addition to diarrhea and fever.

Contemporary herbalists recommend using the herb externally for varicose veins and internally for diarrhea, dysentery, colds, flu, bleeding gums, and sore throat.

Jethro Kloss, in his book, 'The Back To Eden' describes the use of bayberry thus:

"Bayberry is excellent as an emetic after narcotic poisoning of any kind. It is good to follow the bayberry with an emetic, such as lobelia. Bayberry is also valuable when taken in the usual manner for all kinds of hemorrhages, whether from the stomach, lungs, or excessive menstruation, and when combined with capsicum it is an unfailing remedy for this.

Very good in leukorrhea. Has an excellent general effect on the female organs, also has an excellent influence on the uterus during pregnancy, and makes a good douche. Excellent results will be obtained from its use in goiter. In diarrhea and dysentery, use the tea as an enema.

For gangrenous sores, boils, or carbuncles, use as a wash and poultice, or apply the powdered bayberry to the infection. The tea is an excellent wash for spongy and bleeding gums. The tea taken internally is useful in jaundice, scrofula, and canker sores in the throat and mouth.

The tea taken warm promotes perspiration, improves the whole circulation and tones up the tissues. Taken in combination with yarrow, catnip, sage, or peppermint, it is unexcelled for colds."

Remedies For

As a circulatory stimulant, Bayberry plays a role in many conditions when they are approached in a holistic way. Due to its specific actions it is a valuable astringent in diarrhea and dysentery. It is indicated in mucous colitis. As a gargle it helps sore throats and as a douche it helps in leucorrhoea. It may be used in the treatment of colds. Diarrhea. Bayberry root bark contains an antibiotic chemical (myricitrin), which may fight a broad range of bacteria and protozoa. Myricitrin's antibiotic action supports bayberry's traditional use against diarrhea and dysentery. Bayberry also contains astringent tannins, which add to its value in treating diarrhea.

Fever: The antibiotic myricitrin also helps reduce fever, thus lending credence to bayberry's use among the Choctaw Indians.

Intriguing Possibility: Myricitrin promotes the flow of bile and might potentially be of value in liver and gallbladder ailments, but as yet no research demonstrates this.

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Description

Bayberry is native to the USA but widely cultivated in Europe and the British Isles. In the Southeast USA, it matures into an evergreen tree that reaches about 35 feet. Further north, the plant becomes smaller. Around the Great Lakes, mature plants rarely grow taller than 3 feet. Bayberry has grayish bark, waxy branches, and dense, narrow, delicately toothed leaves dotted with resin glands, which produce a fragrant aroma when crushed. Yellow flowers appear in spring and produce nutlike fruits thickly covered with wax.

Dosage

For a decoction, boil I teaspoon of powdered root bark in a pint of water for 10 to 15 minutes. Add a bit of milk and drink cool, up to 2 cups a day. You'll find the taste bitter and astringent. A tincture might go down more easily. In a tincture, take 1/2 teaspoon up to twice a day. Bayberry should not be given to children under age 2. For older children and people over 65, start with a low-strength preparation and increase strength if necessary.

Combinations: As a digestive astringent it may be used with Comfrey Root and Agrimony. For colds and fevers combine with diaphoretics such as Pleurisy Root.

Safety

The high tannin content of bayberry makes the herb of questionable value for anyone with a history of cancer. In various studies, tannins show both pro- and anti-cancer action. Their cancer-promoting action has received more publicity, notably from a study published in the journal of the National Cancer institute, which showed that tannins produce malignant tumors in laboratory animals. But tannins have also been shown to have an anti-cancer effect against some animal tumors. Those with a history of cancer, particularly stomach or colon cancer, should exercise caution and not use this herb. Do not take more than the recommended amount. Add milk to reduce the risk.

Other Side Effects

In large doses, bayberry root bark may cause stomach distress, nausea, and vomiting. Those with chronic gastrointestinal conditions, such as colitis should use it cautiously. Bayberry changes the way the body uses sodium and potassium. Those who must watch their sodium/potassium balance, such as people with kidney disease, high blood pressure, or congestive heart failure should consult their physicians before using it. For otherwise healthy non-pregnant, non-nursing adults who need not pay special attention to their sodium/potassium balance, do not have gastrointestinal conditions, and have no history of stomach or colon cancer, bayberry root bark may be used cautiously in amounts typically recommended. Bayberry should be used in medicinal amounts only in consultation with your doctor. if bayberry causes minor discomforts such as nausea or vomiting, stop using it and see your doctor.

American Beech

Name: Beech.

Biological Name: Fagus grandifolia Beech Family, Fagaceae.

Other Names: Beech, American Beech.

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Parts Used: Leaves, nut, bark and root.

History

The beech has enjoyed a long reputation in America as a source of medicines. The Rappahannock Indians steeped beech bark in saltwater to produce a poison ivy lotion. Beech sap was one of the ingredients used to make a syrup that was used for tuberculosis. Beech was used to make ointments for burns, sores, and ulcers. When administered internally, it provided a treatment for bladder, kidney and liver ailments. A decoction of the root or leaves are believed to cure intermittent fevers, dysentery, and diabetes. The oil from the nut was given for intestinal worms.

Remedies For: Beech bark and leaves have astringent and antiseptic properties.

Description

A medium to large deciduous tree growing to 100 feet or taller. The bark is smooth and light gray to blue-gray. The leaves have saw toothed edges with pointed tips. The yellowish flowers arrive in April to May followed by a fruit that has two triangular nuts inside.

Safety

Large doses of nuts may be poisonous to humans and animals.

American Ephedra

Name: Ephedra.

Biological Name: Ephedra sinica, Ephedra intermedia, Ephedra equisetina, Ephedra distacha, Ephedra trifurca.

Other Names: Mahuang, Ma Huang, desert tea, Mormon tea, American ephedra, Chinese ephedra, European ephedra, Pakistani ephedra, Ephedra.

Active Compounds

Ephedra's active medicinal ingredients are the alkaloids ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. The stem contains 1–3% total alkaloids, with ephedrine accounting for 30–90% of this total, depending on the plant species employed.

Both ephedrine and its synthetic counterparts stimulate the central nervous system, dilate the bronchial tubes, elevate blood pressure, and increase heart rate. Pseudoephedrine (the synthetic form) is a popular over-the-counter remedy for relief of nasal congestion.

History

The Chinese have used ephedra medicinally for over 5,000 years. Ephedra is listed as one of the original 365 herbs from the classical first century A.D. text on Chinese herbalism by Shen Nong. Ephedra's traditional medicinal uses include the alleviation of sweating, lung and bronchial constriction, and water retention.

Coughing, shortness of breath, the common cold, and fevers without sweat are all indications for its use. While the active constituent, ephedrine, was isolated in 1887, it was not until 1924 that the herb became popular with physicians in the US. for its broncho-dilating and decongesting properties.

Remedies For: Diaphoretic, bronchial dilator, diuretic. Induces perspiration, warms coldness, relieves wheezing, moves fluids. It is used for common cold, wheezing, bronchial asthma, bronchitis, and edema.

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Useful for

—Asthma
—Common Cold
—Hay fever
—Congestion
—Cough
—Weight loss and obesity

Ephedra is used to treat asthma, hay fever, the common cold, and as a weight loss aid.

Asthma and Hay Fever: Ephedra is useful in the treatment of mild to moderate hay fever and asthma. It is recommended that you supplement the ephedra use with substances that support the adrenal glands, such as licorice, panax ginseng, vitamin C, magnesium, zinc, vitamin B-6, and pantothenic acid.

The traditional herbal treatment of asthma involves the use of ephedra in combination with herbal expectprants. The expectorants modify the secretions from the respiratory tract, ultimately improving its function by having the user spit up the secretions out. The most commonly used expectorants are licorice, grindelia, euphorbia, sundew, and senega.

Weight Loss Aid: Ephedrine suppresses the appetite and increases the metabolic rate of adipose tissue. Ephedrine activates the sympathetic nervous system, increasing the metabolic rate and increasing the amount of the food converted to heat (thermogenesis). This prevents the body from converting these foods to fat, thus helping in the control of weight gain by those who have low metabolism.

Ephedrine is often used in conjunction with methylxanthine sources such as coffee, tea, cola nut, and guarana. The methylxanthines enhances the thermogenic effect of ephedrine. Clinical studies have also shown that aspirin may be effective in increasing the thermogenic effect of ephedrine.

Description

Ephedra is a shrublike plant found in desert regions throughout the world. It is distributed from northern China to Inner Mongolia. The dried green stems of the three Asian species (E. sinica, intermedia, equisetina) are the plant parts employed medicinally. The North American species of ephedra does not appear to contain the active ingredients of its Asian counterparts. The plants are 1.5 to 4 foot high. They typically grow on dry, rocky, or sandy slopes. The many slender, yellow green branches of ephedra have two very small leaf scales at each node. The mature, double seeded cones are visible in the fall.

Dosage

The crude powdered stems of ephedra (with less than 1% ephedrine) are employed at a dose of 1–4 grams per day in tea form.

Tinctures of 1–4 ml three times per day can be taken.

Over-the-counter drugs containing ephedrine can be safely used by adults at a dose of 12.5–25 mg every four hours. Adults should take no more than 150 mg every twenty-four hours.

Pseudoephedrine is typically recommended at a dose of 60 mg every six hours.

Safety

Ephedra should not be used by those with external deficiency with symptoms of spontaneous sweating. Because the alkaloids have an effect similar to that of adrenaline,

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ephedra should not be used with symptoms of high blood pressure or insomnia.

Ephedra has a long history of safe use at the recommended amount. However, abuse of the drug-especially for weight loss-can lead to amphetamine-like side effects, including elevated blood pressure, muscle disturbances, insomnia, dry mouth, heart palpitations, nervousness, and even death due to heart failure.

Anyone with high blood pressure, heart conditions, diabetes, glaucoma, thyroid disease, and those taking MAO-inhibiting antidepressants should consult with a physician before using any type of product with ephedra.

Pseudoephedrine can cause drowsiness and should be used with caution if driving or operating machinery Ephedra-based products should be avoided during pregnancy and lactation and used with caution in children under the age of six years.

US FDA recommends that the amount of ephedra added to dietary supplements to 8 milligrams. FDA wants warning labels put on the products cautioning against taking them for more than a week, and advising consumers not to combine them with other stimulants. These were retracted on strong opposition from the General Accounting Office (GAO), that the agency does not have enough evidence to make such recommendation. However, FDA has kept the warning against mixing ephedrine with other stimulants.

Medical experts suggest that used as a stimulant, ephedra can raise blood pressure and heart rate, cause vomiting, heart palpitations, dizziness, nervousness and more serious reactions, including heart attacks, seizures and strokes. U.S. FDA has said that between 1997 and 1999 it had received 140 reports of illness or death linked to ephedra alkaloids. Since then, the agency has gotten another 103 such reports, but those haven't been investigated. A recent study reported in the New England Journal of Medicine suggest that ephedra might be the main culprit for those deaths. (Read the entire article on the discussion of the safety of this drug.) Because of the possible danger due to the abuse, we recommend that you should limit the amount of this herb consumed strictly. It has been shown that many times, the actual amount of the active ingredients present in the products can differ substantially from batch to batch due to poor quality controls. So, caution is recommended. We also recommend that you do not take this with stimulants such as caffeine.

American Ginseng

Name: American Ginseng.

Biological Name: Panax Ginseng, Panax quinquefolius.

Family: Araliaceae.

Other Names: American Ginseng, Five fingers, Tartar Root, five leafed ginseng, redberry, garantoquen, sang, Ginseng - American.

Parts Used: Root.

Active Compounds: Glycoside content of the plant is believed to be responsible for the herb's stress response.

Remedies For: Demulcent, panacea, stimulant, stomachic. Ginseng is best known for its anti-fatigue, energy giving properties. It is widely used as a stimulant. This herb is believed to

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be of value in any condition where nervous or mental exhaustion is concerned. Accepted as being beneficial in loss of appetite, stomach and digestive affections (to relieve nausea and vomiting) American Indian tribes use it as a love potion and charm. It is world's number one aphrodisiac.

Description

Perennial herb. Grows to 8–24 inches tall. The plant has three compound leaves, each composed of five toothed leaflets, atop a straight stem. Tiny greenish white flowers appear in June–July. Bright red berries appear in late summer. The root is fleshy and is the part used as a herb. The root grows very slowly. It takes approximately 5–7 years to attain usable size. The name Panax is very closely related to the word panacea, all-healing. It had been respected for centuries as a cure-all. "Ginseng" means "wonder of the world".

Dosage

Dried ginseng can be chewed or it can be powdered and brewed as tea. Use as required.

American Mistletoe

Name: American Mistletoe.

Biological Name: Phoradendron flavescens. Mistletoe family, Loranthaceae.

Other Names: American Mistletoe, Golden Bough, Mistletoe, false mistletoe, goldenbough, birdlime.

Parts Used: Leaves.

History

Romans, celtics and Germans believed that Mistletoe is a key to the supernatural. Mistletoe stood for sex and fertility. Hence our current tradition of exchanging kisses under a sprig of mistletoe.

Remedies For: Emetic, nervine.

Stimulant to soothe muscle, producing a rise in blood pressure and increases the contraction of the intestine and uterus. This herb had been recommended as an oxytocic in postpartum hamorrhage and menorrhagia and as a circulatory and uterine stimulant. The plant may induce menstruation. It had been shown effective in treating tumors in experimental animals. It is recommended that, due to the toxicity of the plant, internal consumption of this herb be avoided.

Description

This plant is sometimes called false mistletoe to distinguish it from the European genus, Viscum album. There are differences in medicinal properties between the two species. This is a parasitic evergreen shrub. The branching woody stem is swollen at the nodes and bears opposite, leathery, yellowish green leaves which are hairy when young but glabrous at maturity. Small whitish flowers appear in May- July followed by white berries in December.

Dosage

Do not use without medical supervision.

Safety

U.S. FDA lists this plant as "unsafe".

NOT RECOMMENDED.

Do not use without medical supervision.

American Nightshade

Name: Poke.

Biological Name: Phytolacca americana,

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Phytolacca decandra Phytolaccaceae.

Other Names: Poke, Pokeweed, red weed, red ink plant, garget, pigeon berry, scoke, coakum, Virginia polk, pocan bush, American nightshade, red ink berries.

Parts Used: Root, leaves, berries.

Active Compounds: Triterpenoid saponins; the phytolaccosides A, B, C, D & E. Based on the aglycones phytolaccagenin and phytolaccicacid.

Lectins; mixture known as pokeweed mitogen, consisting of a series of glycoproteins.

Remedies For

Anti-rheumatic, stimulant, anti-catarrhal, purgative, emetic, alterative, resolvent, deobstruent, detergent, antisyphilitic, antiscorbutic, cathartic.

CAUTION: DO NOT EAT THIS PLANT RAW OR INADEQUATELY COOKED. POKE ROOT SHOULD BE BOILED BEFORE EATING AND THE WATER DRAINED OFF AND DISCARDED; BOIL IT AGAIN IN FRESH WATER AND DRAIN OFF THE WATER AGAIN. IT MAY THEN BE EATEN.

Poke Root has a wide range of uses. Used as a remedy for use in infection of the upper respiratory tract, removing catarrh and aiding the cleansing of the lymphatic glands. Also for catarrh, tonsillitis, laryngitis, swollen glands, mumps. It will be found of value in lymphatic problems elsewhere in the body and especially for mastitis, where it can be used internally and as a poultice. Poke Root also has a use in rheumatism, especially where it is long standing. Care must be taken with this herb as in large dosage it is powerfully emetic and purgative. Externally as a lotion or ointment it may be used to rid the skin of scabies and other pests.

Combinations: For lymphatic problems it may be used with Cleavers or Blue Flag.

Dosage

Decoction: Only small amounts of this herb should be used. Put 1/4 teaspoonful of the root in a cup of water, bring to a boil and simmer gently for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1/4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

CAUTION: IN LARGE DOSES POKE ROOT IS A POWERFUL EMETIC AND PURGATIVE. DO NOT EXCEED THE DOSAGES RECOMMENDED. THE SEEDS, WHICH ARE PRESENT IN THE BERRIES, ARE POISONOUS AND SHOULD NOT BE EATEN. SEE ALSO THE CAUTION ABOVE REGARDING COOKING.

No other information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

American Pennyroyal

Name: Pennyroyal.

Biological Name: Mentha pulegium, Hedeoma pulegioides Labiatae.

Other Names: Pennyroyal, American Pennyroyal, European Pennyroyal, tickweed, sqaw mint, stinking balm, thickweed, mock pennyroyal, mosquito plant, squaw balm.

Parts Used: Aerial parts, oil.

Active Compounds: Volatile oil, consisting mainly of pulegone, isopulegone, menthol,

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isomenthone, limonene, piperitone, neomenthol. Miscellaneous; bitters and tannins.

Remedies For

Carminative, diaphoretic, stimulant, emmenagogue.

With its richly aromatic volatile oil, Pennyroyal will ease flatulence and abdominal colic due to wind. It will relax spasmodic pain and ease anxiety. Its main use is as an emmenagogue to stimulate the menstrual process and to strengthen uterine contractions. Avoid using during pregnancy. The oil should be avoided as it can act far too strongly.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried leaves and let infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

CAUTION: AVOID DURING PREGNANCY.

No other information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

American Poplar

Name: White Poplar.

Biological Name: Populus tremuloides Salicaceae.

Other Names: White Poplar, Quaking Aspen, American Poplar.

Parts Used: The bark.

Active Compounds

—Phenolic glycosides; salicin and populin

—Tannins

Remedies For

Anti-inflammatory, astringent, antiseptic, anodyne, cholagogue, bitter tonic.

White Poplar is useful in the treatment of arthritis and rheumatism where there is much pain and swelling. Its use is similar to that of Willow, and is most effective when used in a broad therapeutic approach and not by itself. It is very helpful during the flare-up of rheumatoid arthritis. As a cholagogue it can be used to stimulate digestion and especially stomach and liver function, particularly where there is loss of appetite. Useful for the treatment of feverish colds and infections such as cystitis. Also used in the treatment of diarrhea.

Combinations: In the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis it may be used with Black Cohosh, Bogbean and Celery. As a digestive stimulant it can be used with Balmony and Golden Seal.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried bark in a cup of water, bring to the boil and simmer for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day. To stimulate appetite, drink 30 minutes before meals.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

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American Saffron

Name: Saffron.

Biological Name: Crocus sativus, Crocus saffron, Iridaceae.

Other Names: Saffron, Kum Kuma, Zaffran, Kesar, Autumn crocus, Spanish saffron, dyer's saffron, thistle saffron, bastard saffron, parrot's corn, American saffron, Agnishikha, Bhavarakta, Jafran, Kashmirajanma, Kecara, Keshar, Kessar, Kunkumappu, Kunkuma-kesara, Kunkumma-purru, Kunkuma-puvva, Kusrunam, Mangal, Mangalya, Safran, Saurab, Zafrah, Zipharana.

Description

Saffron is a small perennial plant which is cultivated in many places, but particularly in France, Spain, Sicily, and Iran. In springtime, an onion-like corm produces basal, linear leaves which are surrounded as a group at the bottom by cylindrical sheaths. These gray-green leaves have hairy margins and grow to about 1 or 1–1/2 feet feet long. About August or September, the corm produces a funnel-shaped, reddish-purple (sometimes lilac or white) flower.

Parts Used: Dried stigmas.

History

The name saffron comes from the Arabic zafaran (means yellow)—a sacred color chosen by Buddhist monks for their robes.

Saffron is very expensive. 200,000 flowers have to be harvested by hand to obtain 1 pound of saffron—This may explain the high cost. Saffron had been prized as a dye medication and culinary spice since Greek and Roman times. Arab traders introduced the spice to Spain. Became a mainstay of many Mediterranean diets.

Due to the high cost, this herb is often adulterated. Be careful in choosing.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action

Alterative, anodyne, antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, appetizer, carminative, emmenagogue, expectorant, sedative, stimulant, rejuvenative.

Uses

Saffron has been used, in small doses only, for coughs, whooping cough, stomach gas, gastrointestinal colic and insomnia. As an ingredient in herb liqueurs, it serves as a stimulant to appetite; and it is sometimes made into a salve for treatment of gout.

Saffron is used in sedatives, as an antispasmodic and for flatulence. It is also used in perfumes and dyes. Saffron is used in small doses, in fevers, melancholia, enlargement of the liver, and asthma. Saffron is also useful for treating anemia, chlorosis and seminal debility. Saffron is considered to be a sovereign remedy, not to be excelled in virtue by any other drug as a stimulant and aphrodisiac.

Other Uses of Saffron

For rheumatism and neuralgia.

For looseness of the bowels to relieve flatulent colic, amenorrhoea, dysmenorrhoea, leucorrhoea.

For painful affections of the uterus.

For headaches.

For bruises and superficial sores.

Hemorrhoids.

Snake bite.

Saffron Classic Remedy is a classical

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Ayurvedic remedy that is useful for chronic diarrhea, chronic discharges and seminal weakness.

Dosage

Infusion, milk decoction, powder.

Infusion: Steep 6 to 10 stigmas in 1/2 cup water. Take 1/2 to 1 cup a day, unsweetened, a mouthful at a time.

Tincture, Dose: 5 to 20 Minims.

Saffron tea (1 in 80), dose—1 to 4 ounces.

Safety

Do not use when pregnant; large doses is narcotic

CAUTION: SAFFRON CONTAINS A POISON THAT ACTS ON THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM AND DAMAGES THE KIDNEYS. LARGE DOSES CAN HAVE SEVERE EFFECTS; 10 TO 12 GRAMS IS A FATAL DOSE FOR HUMAN BEINGS.

The high cost of saffron and the availability of synthetic substitutes make its use as medicine rare.

American Sanicle

Name: American Sanicle.

Biological Name: Sanicula marilandica.

Other Names: Sanicle, American sanicle, black sanicle, black snakeroot, wood sanicle, sanicle root, pool root, butterwort.

Description

American sanicle is a perennial plant found in rich woods from Newfoundland south to Georgia, and west to Alberta and Colorado. A fibrous rootstock produces a light- green,. furrowed, hollow stern bearing a few sessile leaves or none at all. Most of the plant's bluish-green, palmately lobed leaves are basal, growing on long petioles. Small umbels of white, greenish-white, or yellowish flowers bloom from May to July.

Parts Used: Rootstock, leaves.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action

Astringent, expectorant, nervine, vulnerary, alterative, discutient, depurative.

Uses

The astringent properties of sanicle root make it useful as a gargle for irritations and sores in the mouth and throat and also internally for ulcers, hemorrhage and excessive menstrual flow. The Powdered root has been popularly used against intermittent fever and chorea (St. Vitus' dance).

Jethro Ross calls this herb "a cure-all". It possesses powerful cleansing and healing properties.

Dosage

Infusion: Steep 1 tsp. Rootstock in water. Take 1 cup a day.

Tincture: A dose is from 15 to 30 drops

Safety

No information available.

American Senna

Name: Senna.

Biological Name: Cassia acutiplia, Cassia angustifolia, Cassia senna, Leguminosae.

Other Names: Senna, Rajavriksha, Fan xia ye, American senna, locust plant, wild senna, Fan xie ye.

Parts Used: Leaves, pods (milder).

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Active Compounds

Anthraquinone glycosides: In the leaf; sennosides A and B based on the aglycones sennidin A & B, senosides C & D which are glycosides of heterodianthrones of aloe-emodin and rhein. Others include palmidin A, rhein anthrone & aloe-emodin glycosides, some free anthraquinones and some potent, novel compounds of as yet undetermined structure. C. Senna usually contains more of the sennosides. In the fruit; sennosides A and B and a closely related glycoside sennoside A1.

Naphthalene glycosides: tinnevellin glycoside & 6-hydroxymusizin glycoside Miscellaneous; mucilage, flavonoids, volatile oil, sugars, resins etc.

Remedies For

Purgative, anthchiiintic, antipyretic, alterative, cathartic, laxative, vermifuge, diuretic.

Senna is a powerful cathartic used in the treatment of constipation, working through a stimulation of intestinal peristalsis. It is vital to recognize, however, that the constipation is a result of something else and not the initial cause and that this has to be sought and dealt with.

Ayurvedic Applications

Indications: Constipation, inflammatory skin conditions, hypertension, obesity Senna is a strong purgative that should be taken with care and in proper dosage. It has an irritant effect upon the intestinal membrane, and may cause griping, pain or nausea, along with liquid stools or diarrhea. It can be corrected by adding 1/4 amount of stomachic herbs, like ginger or fennel seeds, with its dosage. Senna is mainly for severe constipation, the constipation following a fever or for clearing Pitta from the small intestines. However, it cannot be used where there is inflammation in the G.I. Tract itself because of irritation. Rhubarb is considered to be the herb of choice in this situation as it has fewer side effects.

Combinations: It is best to combine Senna with aromatic, carminative herbs to increase palatability and reduce griping, for instance by using Cardamon, Ginger or Fennel.

Description

Cassia senna is native to tropical Africa and cultivated in Egypt and the Sudan and elsewhere; Cassia angustifolia is native to India and cultivated mainly in India and Pakistan.

Dosage

Infusion (hot or cold).

Powder (1 to 2 gms) as purgative.

Infusion: The dried pods or leaves should be steeped in warm water for 6–12 hours. If they are Alexandrian Senna Pods use 3–6 in a cup of water; if they are Tinnevelly Senna, use 4–12 pods. These names are given to two different species when sold commercially.

Tincture: Take 2–4 ml of the tincture taken before bedtime.

Safety

Caution: Hemorrhoids, inflammatory conditions of the gastro intestinal tract, diarrhea, pregnancy Repeated use of strong purgatives such as Senna may aggravate constipation and weaken the tone of the colon. Chronic constipation may be dealt with better by moistening therapy and by laxative oils. Senna leaf should not be

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overused by pregnant, menstruating, or postpartum women.

American Skullcap

Name: Skullcap.

Biological Name: Scutellaria laterifolia Labiatae.

Other Names: Skullcap, Scullcap, Hoodwort, Quaker Bonnet, Helmet Flower, European Skullcap, Greater Skullcap, American skullcap, blue skullcap, blue pimpernel, hoodwart, hooded willow herb, side-flowering skullcap, mad dogweed, mad weed, helmet flower.

Parts Used: Aerial parts.

Active Compounds: Scutellarin, a flavonoid glycoside and many other flavones.

Iridoids; catalpol is present Volatile oil and waxes, mainly C31, C33 and C35 hydrocarbons Tannins.

Remedies For

Nervine tonic, anti-spasmodic, hypotensive.

Skullcap relaxes states of nervous tension whilst at the same time renewing and revivifying the central nervous system.

It has a specific use in the treatment of seizure and hysterical states as well as epilepsy. May be used in all exhausted or depressed conditions. Can be used with complete safety in the easing of pre-menstrual tension.

Combinations: It combines well with Valerian, Passion Flower, Black Cohosh etc..

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day or when needed.

Tincture: Take 2–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

American Sloe

Name: Black Haw.

Biological Name: Viburnum prunifolium Caprifoliaceae.

Other Names: Stagbush, American Sloe, black haw.

Parts Used: Dried bark of root, stem or trunk.

Active Compounds

—Coumarins, including scopoletin

—Salicin

—l-Methyl-2,3-dibutyl hemimellitate

—Miscellaneous; viburnin, plant acids, volatile oil, tannin.

History

In 1866 Dr. E.W Jenks of Detroit described black haw as particularly valuable in preventing abortion and miscarriage, whether habitual or otherwise, whether threatened from accidental cause, or criminal drugging. The herb was thought to tone up the system, preventing or removing those harassing nervous symptoms that so Often torment and wear out the pregnant women. It enables the system to resist the deleterious influence of drugs so often used for the purpose of producing abortions. Black haw

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was largely employed in slavery times as a preventative of abortion, and to counteract the effects of cotton root [an abortive agent) taken with criminal intent. The sedative and anodyne properties of this herb was used for treating dysmenorrhoea. It enables the uterus to bear the burden cast on it with much less suffering.

Remedies For

Anti-spasmodic, nervine, hypotensive, astringent.

Black Haw is a powerful relaxant of the uterus and is used for dysmenorrhoea, false labor pains as well as in threatened miscarriage. Its relaxant and sedative actions are taken advantage of in its use in reducing blood pressure in hypertension. Its anti-spasmodic properties makes it a viable treatment for asthma. Heinerman, in his book 'Miracle Healing Herbs' gives anecdotal evidence of the use of this herb for treating asthma and bronchitis. It was felt that the herb helped in the evacuation of mucus in the lungs and throat. Traditional use of black haw is for the treatment of uterine irritability and hyperasthesia; threatened abortion; uterine colic; dysmenorrhoea with deficient menses; severe lumbar and bearing-down pains; cramp-like, expulsive menstrual pain; intermittent, painful contractions of the pelvic tissues; after-pains and false pains of pregnancy; and obstinate hiccough.

Description

This herb is found in the Eastern and Central USA. This deciduous shrub can reach almost 16-1/2 feet in height, with its branches spreading upward. The leaves are dull-colored, finely toothed and nearly 3 inches long. The flowers are quite noticeable, somewhat large, and appear in nearly-topped heads between 3 and 5 inches in width. Bright red berries appear in August.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 2 teaspoonfuls of the dried bark in a cup of water, bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 5–10 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information is available. Do not eat the uncooked fruit.

American Vervain

Name: Vervain.

Biological Name: Verbena officinalis, Labiatae.

Other Names: Vervain, Wild Hyssop, Simpler's Joy, American vervain, blue vervain, false vervain, traveler's joy, Indian hyssop, purvain.

Parts Used: Aerial parts.

Active Compound

—Iridoids, verbenin, verbenalin and bastatoside.

—Miscellaneous; essential oil, mucilage and others.

Remedies For

Nervine tonic, sedative, anti-spasmodic, diaphoretic, hypotensive, galactagogue, hepatic, tonic, sudorific, expectorant, vulnerary, emetic, emmenagogue, vermifuge.

Vervain strengthens the nervous system while relaxing any tension and stress. It can be used to ease depression and melancholia,

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especially when this follows illness such as influenza. It is also used in seizure and hysteria.

As a diaphoretic it can be used in the early stages of fevers. As a hepatic remedy it is of help in inflammation of the gall-bladder and jaundice. It may be used as a mouthwash against caries and gum disease.

Combinations: In the treatment of depression it may be used with Skullcap, Oats & St. Johns Wort.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–3 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 2–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Aml Parni

Name: Rhubarb.

Biological Name: Rheum emodi, Rheum officinale, Rheum acuminatum, Rheum speciforme, Rheum webbianum, Rheum moorcroftianum, Rheum australe, Rheum palmatum Polygonaceae family.

Other Names: Rhubarb, amla-vetasa, aml parni, revand-chini, archu, Chinese Rhubarb, Turkey rhubarb, Da huang, Bangla Revanchini, Himalayan rhubarb, Indian rhubarb, Ladakirevanda-chini, Nattu ireval-chinni, Reval-chini, Rhabarber, Rheuchini, Rhubarb de Perse, Tursak, Variyattu.

Parts Used: The drug consists of the dried rhizome or underground stem of the plant, either whole or cut into pieces of suitable length. The roots or rhizomes are dug up, cut transversely into short pieces (rounds and flats), threaded on a string, and dried in the sun or by artificial heat.

Note: Rhizome of Rheum palmatum and other species are used, not the garden rhubarb.

Active Compounds

Anthraquinone derivatives such as chrysophanic acid (=chrysophanol), emodin, aloe-emodin, rhein & physcion, with their O-glycosides such as glucorhein, chrysophanein, glucoemodin; sennosides A-E, reidin C & others. Tannins; in Chinese Rhubarb: d-catechin and epicatechin gallate, with various cinnamoyl and coumaroyl golloyl glucosides and fructoses.

Stilbene Derivatives: Related stilbene glycosides present in other types.

Miscellaneous: Volatile oil, containing diisobutyl phthalate, cinnamic and ferulic acids; rutin, fatty acids, calcium oxalate etc.

Remedies For

Purgative, alterative, hemostatic, antipyretic, anthelmintic, stomachic, bitter tonic, cathartic, laxative, atonic indigestion

Constipation (with fevers, ulcers, infections), diarrhea, Pitta dysentery, jaundice, liver disorders. Rhubarb Root has a purgative action for use in the treatment of constipation, but also has an astringent effect following this. It therefore has a truly cleansing action upon the gut, removing debris and then astringing with antiseptic properties as well.

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Note: Rhubarb Root may color the urine yellow or red.

—Small doses—tonic hepatic.

—Large doses—cathartic.

—Ayurvedic Applications.

Rhubarb is stomachic, bitter, tonic, cathartic. Useful for simple diarrhea, but not in constipation or any affection in which a continuous aperient action is necessary; Its stimulating combined with its aperient properties render it valuable in atonic dyspepsia. Best used for the ailments of children and aged persons. Combined with ginger, it may be given in the form of pill in cases where the bowels are sluggish. Ordinary dose of the powder is from 5 to 20 grains.

Some persons chew the root. Rhubarb is an important ingredient of a large variety of herbal compounds. Mixed with Grey Powder it is an excellent remedy for irritation of the bowels, common among children when teething and in chronic dysentery, duodenal catarrh or catarrh of the biliary ducts with jaundice and in certain skin diseases.

As a mild purgative, rhubarb protects colon tone, used with licorice and psyllium in older and dryer persons (ginger or fennel is added to remove griping action-4 parts rhubarb: 1 part ginger or fennel); purges bile, ama, stagnant food and blood; reduces weight and fat. It is stronger when used with epsom salt. Traditional Chinese Herbalism Applications: Purgative, antibacterial, antitumor, antifungal, diuretic, hemostatic, cholagogue, antihypertensive, lowers serum cholesterol, anti-inflammatory Rhubarb is one of the more powerful herbs used in Chinese medicine. It is excellent for draining damp heat, especially when there is accompanying constipation. It moves the blood and is good for blood stagnation associated with acute stabbing pain and bruises, for which it can be taken both internally as well as externally in a liniment.

Useful for dysenteric conditions caused by damp heat with symptoms of bleeding in the stool. It can also be taken for vomiting of blood. It can be used both internally and topically for infections. It kills blood flukes. As an external remedy for inflammatory skin conditions such as boils and bums, rhubarb powder can be used alone or combined with other herbs with a little flour and water or honey to hold it together.

Combinations: It should be combined with carminative herbs to relieve any griping that may occur.

Description

This is found native in India. It grows in Himalayas (above 8,000 to 13,000 feet.) It is also found in China, Bhutan, Tibet, Russia, Turkey and India.

Dosage

Infusion, powder (1 gm.-laxative; 3 gms.-purgative), pill.

Decoction: Put 1/2–1 teaspoonful of the root in a cup of water, bring to the boil and simmer gently for l0 minutes. This should be drunk morning and evening.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

CAUTION: DO NOT USE THIS HERB IF YOU ARE PREGNANT.

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DO NOT EAT THE LEAVES—THEY ARE POISONOUS.

Do not take this herb if you are suffering from chronic diarrhea, chills, Vayu hemorrhoids; gout, rheumatism, epilepsy, or uric acid - diseases. The herb causes the urine to turn yellow, but there is no cause for concern. Do not take this herb if you have a tendency to gout, rheumatism, epilepsy or any uric acid disease, owing to the oxalic acid it contains.

This herb should be used only under the direction of a qualified professional.

AMLIKA

Name: Sorrel.

Biological Name: Oxalis corniculata Oxalidaceae.

Parts Used: Leaves.

Remedies For

Action: Cooling, refrigerant, antiscorbutic, appetizing, astringent.

Applications

—appetite
—corns
—digestion
—chronic dysentery
—diarrhea
—dyspepsia
—enteritis (small intestine inflammation)
—eye-removes fibers over cornea
—bilious headaches
—intoxication
—fever
—hemorrhoids
—inflammations
—jaundice
—leprosy
—nervous complaints
—pain
—piles
—poisoning
—rectum prolapse
—rheumatism
—scurvy
—difficult urination
—warts

Dosage

Juice, powder, paste, poultice, pill, soup, confection.

Safety

Do not take if you have gout. No other information available.

AMRITA

Name: Guduchi.

Biological Name: Tinosporia cordifolia, Menisper mum cordifolium, Cocculuc cordifolia Menispermaceae.

Other Names: Guduchi, Amrita, Giloy Amrithu, Gulansha.

Description

This herb is found in the Himalayas, and in many parts of the South India.

Parts Used: Roots, stems.

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES

Action

Alterative, antiperiodic, bitter tonic, diuretic, febrifuge.

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Uses

This herb is used in seminal weakness and urinary affections. It is also a valuable tonic. Other applications of this herb include: fever, gout, jaundice, torpidity of the liver, skin diseases, secondary syphilis, rheumatism, constipation, tuberculosis, and leprosy.

It is a blood purifier and may be useful in AIDS and other immune diseases also. It is also being proposed for cancer patients before and after chemotherapy.

Dosage

Extract, powder, for serious illnesses like cancer, use one or more ounces daily.

Safety

No information available. To be taken only under the direct supervision of a qualified professional.

ANEMARRHENA

Name: Anemarrhena.

Biological Name: Anemarrhenae asphodeloides Liliaceae.

Other Names: Anemarrhena, zhi mu.

Parts Used: Rhizome.

Remedies For

Anti-inflammatory, demulcent, antipyretic, antibacterial, nutritive.

Purges heat, nurtures the yin, relaxes tension. It can be used for fevers accompanied with dryness in the lungs, stomach, or kidneys. This could manifest diversely with diseases such as tuberculosis, chronic bronchitis, chronic low-grade fever, irritability, nocturnal emissions, or abnormally high sex drive.

Dosage

6–12 grams.

Safety

Anemarrhena should not be used by those with diarrhea.

ANGANAPRIYA

Name: Ashoka.

Biological Name: Sarca indica Caesalpiniaceae family.

Other Names: Ashoka Tree, Anganapriya, Asogam, Asokada, Ashopalava, Asok, Asoka, Asoka Tree, Asupala, Gandapushpa, Kankelli, Kenkalimara, Thawgabo, Vichitrah.

Description

This is one of the sacred trees of India. It is found throughout India. The plant is prized for its beautiful foliage and flowers.

Constitution

Historical documents state that Asoka contain haematoxylin. Recent analysis of the dry powdered bark showed the presence of a fair amount of tannin and probably an organic substance containing iron. No active principles of the nature of alkaloid, essential oil, etc., were found. Bark contains a fair amount of tannin and catachin.

Parts Used: Bark, flowers.

MEDICINAL USES

The bark of the herb is strongly astringent and uterine sedative. It acts directly on the muscular fibers of the uterus. It has a stimulating effect on the endometrium and the ovarian tissue. Used for the uterine/ ovarian fibroids, menorrhagia, bleeding hemorrhoids, bleeding dysentery.

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For uterine affections, especially in menorrhagia due to uterine fibroids and other causes. Prepare a decoction of the bark by boiling 4 ounces of the bark in 4 ounces of milk and 16 ounces of water till the water is evaporated. Take this with milk in two or three divided doses during the course of the day in menorrhagia. Start it from the 4th day of the monthly period. Continue taking this till the bleeding ceases. For internal bleeding, hemorrhoids and hemorrhagic dysentery Bark of asoka tree is useful in internal bleeding hemorrhoids and hemorrhagic dysentery. Liquid extract of the bark was found to do considerable good. Flowers pounded and mixed with water are useful in hemorrhagic dysentery.

Dosage

Preparation: Decoction, powder, pill, ghee, paste, herbal wine.

Safety

No information is available.

ANGELICA

Name: Angelica.

Biological Name: Angelica archangelica, Angelica sinensis Carrot family, Umbelliferae.

Other Names: Angelica, dong-quei, dong-quai, tang-kuei or dang-qui, dong quai in China.

Parts Used: Roots, only the hips of the root, up to the head is used.

Active Compounds

Coumarins, bergapten, linalool and borneol.

Traditionally, dong quai is believed to have a balancing or adaptogenic effect on the female hormonal system. Contrary to the opinion of several authors, dong quai does not qualify as a phytoestrogen or have any hormone-like actions in the body. A large part of its actions with regard to premenstrual syndrome may be related to its antispasmodic actions, particularly on smooth muscles.

History

Legends says that angelica was revealed in a dream by an angel to cure the deadly bubonic plague. In China, angelica has been used for several thousand years to treat many kinds of female problems. In traditional Chinese medicine, dong quai is often referred to as the "female ginseng." It is often included in prescriptions for abnormal menstruation, suppressed menstrual flow, painful or difficult menstruation, and uterine bleeding. A traditional use of dong quai was for hot flashes associated with perimenopause. Dong quai is also used for both men and women with cardiovascular disease, including high blood pressure and problems with pe-ripheral circulation.

Remedies For

Appetizer, carminative, expectorant, stimulant, stomachic, tonic.

Angelica is Useful For

—Fibrocystic breast disease

—Menopause

—Premenstrual syndrome

Angelica is described as a herb with "an affinity for the female constitution". It is good for treating anemia and weak glands, regulating monthly periods, correcting hot flashes and vaginal spasms (PMS), and assisting women through the difficult transition of menopause.

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It is never given to women during pregnancy. The upper part of the root is considered a great blood builder.

The tails of the root is used in emergencies as a blood clot dissolver after serious accidents or for expelling the afterbirth that has failed to appear. The coumarins in angelica are valuable medication for reducing high-protein edemas, such as swelling of the lymph nodes (lymphedema). It is also used for treating psoriasis accompanying arthritis.

Description

Angelica is a biennial or perennial herb that is found in in countries such as UK, Lapland and Iceland. In folklore, it is touted as "a protection against contagion, or purifying the blood and for curing practically every conceivable maladies". Chinese consider angelica (dang-qui) second only to ginseng.

This plant is commonly found in well watered mountain ravines, riverbanks and damp meadows. Its stem is round, grooved, hollow, branched near the top, tinged with blue. The plant grows to 3 to 7 feet.

The leaves grow from dilated sheaths that surround the stem. The plant produces greenish-white flowers in June to August followed by elliptic-oblong fruit that is composed of two yellow winged seeds.

Dosage

The powdered root can be used in capsules, tablets, tinctures, or as a tea. Many women take 3–4 grams per day. 2 capsules of dong-qui twice or three times daily for severe female problems. Use less for less severe cases. Chinese herbalists advise that for best results, little or no fruit should be eaten while you take dong-quai. Do not take any other root teas such as ginseng for 2 to 3 hours after taking this medication. Use vegetables cooked with a slice of ginger to bring proper balance.

Safety

Dong quai is generally considered to be of extremely low toxicity. It may cause some fair-skinned persons to become more sensitive to sunlight. Persons using it on a regular basis should limit prolonged exposure to the sun or other sources of ultraviolet radiation. Dong quai is not recommended for pregnant or lactating women.

ANGELICA DU HUO

Name: Pubescent angelica.

Biological Name: Angelicae pubescentis Umbelliferae.

Other Names: Pubescent angelica, Angelica du huo, Du huo.

Parts Used: Root.

Remedies For

Antibiotic, anti-rheumatic, anti-inflammatory, antihypertensive, analgesic, sedative. This herb is useful for rheumatic pains of the lower body and for patients whose mobility is impaired as a result of pains in the waist, legs, and feet. It can also be used for external diseases caused by wind and internal dampness with symptoms of headaches, aching joints, and slight aversion to cold.

Dosage

3–9 grams.

Safety

Do not use this herb when there is in deficiency, especially when there is heat.

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ANGELICA ROOT

Latin Name: Angelica archangelica.

A Remedy For

—Appetite loss

—Gas

—Indigestion

What It Is; Why It Works

Known in Europe since the 17th century, Angelica is the fleshy root of the wild celery plant. It stimulates production of digestive juices, improves the flow of bile into the digestive tract, and combats digestive spasms. Don't confuse the European variety of this root with Chinese Angelica, or Dong Quai. The Chinese version is used as a remedy for menstrual problems and the symptoms of menopause, tonic for anemia (loss of red blood cells), and a treatment for heart disease and high blood pressure. European Angelica, on the other hand, was originally thought to be a cure for plague. Later, it was recommended for the common cold. Today, only its digestive uses are considered valid.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Angelica.

Special Cautions

Angelica increases sensitivity to sunlight. To avoid a sunburn, minimize your exposure to the sun while using this drug.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Crushed Angelica Root can be made into a tea, using one teaspoonful per cup. Allow the root to steep for 10 to 20 minutes. You may also find fluid extracts of Angelica, oil of Angelica, and solutions of Angelica in alcohol (tinctures of Angelica).

Typical Dosage

Angelica is taken orally. The usual daily dosage is:

Crushed Angelica Root: 4.5 grams (almost 1 teaspoonful).

Fluid Extract of Angelica: 1.5 to 3 grams (about a half teaspoonful).

Angelica Tincture: 1.5 grams (about a quarter teaspoonful).

Essential Oil of Angelica: 10 to 20 drops

Strengths of commercial preparations may vary. Follow the manufacturer's labeling whenever available.

ANISE

Name: Anise.

Biological Name: Pimpinella anisum Carrot Family, Umbelliferae.

Other Names: Anise, Aniseed, Sweet Cumin, star anise, Chinese anise, illicium.

Parts Used: Seed, Anethole and other aromatic compounds.

Active Compounds

Volatile oil, 1–4%, consisting of largely trans-anethole (70–90%), with estragole (methylchavicol), anisic acid, b-caryophylline, anisaldehyde, linalool, anise ketone (methoxyphenylacetone); the polymers of anethole, dianethole and

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photoanethole; an Egyptian variety carvene, carvone, and alpha-zingiberene. Coumarins, such as bergapten, umbelliferone, scopoletin Flavonoid glycosides including rutin, isovitexin, quercetin, luteolin, and apigenin glycosides Phenylpropanoids, including l-propenyl-2-hydroxy-5-methoxy-benzene-2-(2-methyl-butyrate).

Miscellaneous: Lipids, fatty acids, sterols, proteins and carbohydrates.

History

This herb had been used for many centuries. The ancient Greeks, including Hippocrates, prescribed it for coughs. Ancient Romans used Anise in a special cake that concluded their enormous feasts. Historically, the herb was used because of its flavor (licorice flavor), as an aid for digestion, as an aphrodisiac, for colic and to combat nausea.

Ancient Chinese physicians used the herb as a digestive aid, flatulence remedy, and breath freshener. Early English herbalists recommended the herb for hiccups, for promoting milk production for nursing mothers, fro treatment of water retention, headache, asthma. Bronchitis, insomnia, nausea, lice, infant colic, cholera, and even cancer.

Remedies For

Expectorant, anti-spasmodic, carminative, anti-microbial, aromatic, galactogogue.

Improves memory, get rid of oily skin, calm coughs, increases milk production for nursing mothers and serve as a natural antacid.

Commercially, it is very popular as a fragrance and a flavoring. It is very effective as a carminative (to relieve gas pains).

Used as a cough remedy, bronchitis, asthma, as a digestive aid, may be used for relieving menopausal discomforts, treating some form of prostate cancer in men. It may have potential in treating hepatitis and cirrhosis, although tests are being conducted on this.

Indications: The volatile oil in Aniseed provides the basis for its internal use to ease griping, intestinal colic and flatulence. It also has an expectorant and anti-spasmodic action and may be used in bronchitis, in tracheitis where there is persistent irritable coughing, and in whooping cough. Externally, the oil may be used in an ointment base for the treatment of scabies. The oil by itself will help in the control of lice. Aniseed has been demonstrated to increase mucociliary transport and so supporting its use as an expectorant. It has mild estrogenic effects, thought to be due to the presence of dianethole and photoanethole, which explains the use of this plant in folk medicine to increase milk secretion, facilitate birth and increase libido. Anise is a stimulant and carminative; used in cases of flatulence, flatulent colic of infants, and to remove nausea. Sometimes added to other medicines to improve their flavor, correct griping and other disagreeable effects.

Description

A very popular herb in the ancient Chinese and Indian Ayurvedic medical systems for many centuries. There are many different varieties of aniseed. The most common variety is the ash colored kind from Spain. Anise belongs in the same botanical family as parsley and carrots.

Dosage

Make a tea by adding 7 tsp of aniseeds to 1 quart of boiling water and then simmering

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the contents down to 1–1/2 pints. Strain and add 4 tsp each of honey and glycerin (as a preservative). Take 2 tsp of this syrup every few hours to relieve hacking coughs. Take 2 tbsp three times daily to strengthen the memory. For flatulent colic mix Aniseed with equal amounts of Fennel and Caraway. For bronchitis it combines well with Coltsfoot, Horehound and Lobelia.

Preparations & Dosage

Infusion: the seeds should be gently crushed just before use to release the volatile oils. Pour one cup of boiling water over 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the seeds and let it stand covered for 5 to 10 minutes. Take one cup three times daily. To treat flatulence, the tea should be drunk slowly before meals.

Oil: One drop of the oil may be taken internally by mixing it into half a teaspoonful of honey.

Safety

USA: Generally recognized as safe.

UK: General sales list.

Canada: approved as an over-the-counter drug.

France: Traditional Medicine.

Germany: Commission approved as an over-the-counter drug. Although many herbalists recommend anise as a remedy for morning sickness during pregnancy, it is not recommended for use during pregnancy. If your physician recommend against taking any birth control pills, avoid using anise as it has some estrogen activity. Estrogen may contribute to migraine headaches and abnormal blood clotting and promote the development of certain types of brain tumors. FDA considers anise as generally safe if used as recommended for otherwise healthy, non-pregnant, non-nursing adults. High doses of anise oil (several teaspoonfuls) may cause nausea and vomiting. Use only in consultation with your doctor.

ANTHEMIS

Name: Chamomile.

Biological Name: Matricaria recutita, Matricaria chamomilla, Anthemis nobilis Compositae.

Other Names: Camomile, matricaria, anthemis, ground apple, Roman camomile, garden camomile, low camomile, whig plant, German camomile, wild camomile.

Parts Used: Flowers.

Active Compounds

The flowers of chamomile provide 1–2% volatile oils containing alpha-bisabolol, alpha-bisabolol oxides A & B, and matricin (usually converted to chamazulene). Other active constituents include the bioflavonoids apigenin, luteolin, and quercetin. These active ingredients contribute to chamomile's anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, and smooth muscle-relaxing effects, particularly in the gastrointestinal tract.

History

Chamomile has been used for centuries as a medicinal plant, mostly for gastrointestinal complaints. This practice continues today. Chamomile was supposedly dedicated to the sun by the Egyptians because of its curative value in the treatment of ague. It is used in various parts of the world as a table tea. It was used to regulate monthly periods. It is splendid for kidneys, spleen, colds,

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bronchitis, bladder troubles, to expel worms, for argue, dropsy, and jaundice. The tea was believed to make an excellent wash for sore and weak eyes and also for other open sores and wounds. Chamomile was used as a poultice for pains and swellings. Used for hysteria and nervous diseases, prevention of gangrene, for breaking up typhoid and in combination with bittersweet for bruises, sprains, calluses and corns.

Remedies For

Chamomile has Potential for the Treatment of:

—Blocked tear duct
—Canker sores (mouth ulcers)
—Colic
—Diarrhea
—Eczema
—Gingivitis (periodontal disease)
—Indigestion and heartburn
—Insomnia
—Irritable bowel syndrome
—Peptic ulcer
—Skin irritations

Chamomile is a stimulant, bitter, tonic, aromatic, emmenagogue, anodyne, antispasmodic, stomachic. It is used externally to spur wound healing and treat inflammation, and internally for fever, digestive upsets, anxiety, and insomnia. It is used as a fragrance in herbal skin care products. It had also been used in shampoos because of its property to add luster to the hair. Clinical studies have shown that chamomile has mild sedative effects when administered as a tea. Animal studies have shown that Chamomile volatile oil when administered orally to rabbits with impaired kidney function, normalized the uremic condition. This shows that chamomile may be useful in the treatment of impaired kidney functions. The flavonoid apigenin had shown antihistaminic effects in animal studies. Chamomile was also shown useful for reducing inflammation in arthritis. It also relaxed smooth muscle of the intestine. Chamomile was a popular eye wash for treating conjunctivitis and other reactions. It had also been found to promote wound healing.

Digestive Aid: Chamomile was found to relax the digestive as well as the opium based drug papaverine.

Ulcers: Chamomile may help to prevent stomach ulcers and speed their healing.

Women's Health: Antispasmodic action of chamomile soothes the menstrual cramps and to lessen the possibility of premature labor. It was also found to stimulate menstruation.

Tranquilizer/Sedative: Chamomile depresses the central nervous system. It had been shown effective as a tranquilizer from antiquity.

Arthritis: Chamomile relieves arthritic joint inflammation in animal studies.

Infection Prevention: It is a very popular herbal product in Germany for wound care. The essential oil was found to reduce the time required to heal burns. The herb kills the yeast fungi that causes vaginal infections, as well as certain bacteria. Chamomile impairs the replication of polio virus.

Immune Stimulant: Chamomile stimulates the immune system's infection fighting white blood cells (macrophages and B-lymphocytes).

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Description

Chamomile, a member of the daisy family, is native to Europe and western Asia. German chamomile is the most commonly used. It grows freely everywhere.

Roman chamomile is a low European perennial found in dry fields and around gardens and cultivated grounds. The stem is procumbent, the leaves alternate, bipinnate, finely dissected, and downy to glabrous.

The solitary, terminal flower heads, rising 8 to 12 inches above the ground, consist of prominent yellow disk flowers and silver-white ray flowers. It flowers in June and July.

German Chamomile is a Southern European annual plant found wild along roadsides, in fields, and cultivated in gardens. The round, downy, hollow, furrowed stem may be procumbent or rise upright to a height of 16 inches.

The leaves are pale green, bipinnate, sharply incised, and sessile. The flower heads are like those of Roman Chamomile, and the white ray flowers are often bent down to make the disk-flowers even more prominent.

Dosage

Chamomile is often taken as a tea that can be drunk three to four times daily between meals. Common alternatives are to use tablets, capsules, or tinctures. Many people take 2–3 grams of the capsules or tablets or 4–6 ml of the tincture three times per day between meals.

Home Preparation

Approximately 1/2 ounce of flowers to a pint of water. Boil water separately and pour over the plant material and steep for 5 to 20 minutes, depending on the desired effect. Drink hot or warm, 1 to 2 cups or more per day.

Bath Additive: Use 1 pound flowers with 5 quart cold water. Bring to a boil, then steep covered for 10 minutes. Strain and add to bath water. Used as a hair wash it will brighten the hair.

Rubbing Oil: Steep 1 oz fresh or dried flowers in olive oil for 24 hours or more. Strain before using.

Safety

Though rare, allergic reactions to chamomile have been reported. These reactions have included bronchial constriction with internal use and allergic skin reactions with topical use. While such side effects are extremely uncommon, persons with allergies to plants of the Asteraceae family (ragweed, aster, and chrysanthemum) should avoid use of chamomile.

There are no contraindications to the use of chamomile during pregnancy or lactation. Consuming large amount of highly concentrated preparations have shown to cause nausea and vomiting.

FDA lists chamomile as generally regarded as safe. Consult a professional before using any herb.

Apricot Seed

Name: Apricot seed.

Biological Name: Semen pruni armeniaceae Rosaceae.

Other Names: Apricot seed, xing ren.

Parts Used: Seed.

Remedies For

Antitussive, antiasthmatic, demulcent.

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Apricot seed is one of the finest herbs for acute cough and bronchitis. It can be used for either hot or cold conditions when combined with the appropriate herbs and is especially good for dry coughs because of its moistening nature. The herb is believed to moisten the intestines; hence, it is useful in those cases when there is constipation associated with the aforementioned conditions.

Dosage

3–9 grams.

Safety

Apricot seed herb should be used with caution for diarrhea caused by in deficiency.

ARBERRY

Name: Uva Ursi.

Biological Name: Arctostaphylos uva-ursi Heath family, Ericaceae.

Other Names: Bearberry, Bear's grape, Crowberry, Foxberry, Hog cranberry, Kinnikinnick, Mealberry, Arberry, Mountain Box, Mountain Cranberry, Red bearberry, sagackhomi, sandberry, upland cranberry, uva ursi, universe vine, wild cranberry, bear's grape, arberry.

Parts Used: Leaves.

Active Compounds

Bearberry leaves contain arbutin, a powerful astringent that has antiseptic properties. The leaf is also rich in tannins, useful for tanning leather. The glycoside arbutin is the active ingredient in uva ursi. Arbutin is present in fairly high amounts (up to 10%) in uva ursi. It has been shown to kill bacteria in the urine. Before it can act, however, the sugar portion of the arbutin and its attached small molecule (known as hydoquinone) must be broken apart. The urine must be alkaline for this to happen. Hydroquinone is a very powerful anti-microbial agent and is responsible for uva ursi's ability to treat urinary tract infections. Arbutin has also been shown to increase the anti-inflammatory effect of synthetic cortisone.

History

Folk healers have used bearberry leaves to make a tea that is used an a tonic and as a diuretic in many parts of the world. The Cheyenne Indians drank the tea for back sprains; others have used it for venereal diseases.

Remedies For

Urinary tract infection.

Barberry leaves are used to treat bladder and kidney infections. The plant is believed to have urinary antiseptic properties. It helps to reduce accumulations of uric acid and to relive the pain of bladder stones and gravel. It is used to alleviate chronic cystitis. The tea or tincture is used for bronchitis, nephritis, and kidney stones.

Description

A low growing, trailing evergreen shrub, 4 to 6 inches high. The bark is dark brown or somewhat reddish. The leaves are dark green, leathery, oval and taper toward the base.

Dense, drooping clusters of pinkish-white, waxy, urn shaped flowers appear in April-June. The bright red berries ripen in Autumn and last through the winter.

Dosage

Soak the leaves in alcohol or brandy, then add 1 tsp. soaked leaves to 1 cup boiling water.

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Drink 2 to 3 cups a day, cold.

Tincture: Take 10 to 20 drops in water, 3 to 4 times a day. For alcohol based tinctures, many people take 5 ml three times per day. Herbal extracts in capsules or tablets (containing 20% arbutin) in an amount of 250–500 mg three times per day can also be taken. Use of uva ursi should be limited to no more than 14 days. To ensure alkaline urine, 6–8 grams of sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) mixed in a glass of water can be drunk. Individuals with high blood pressure should not take baking soda. Do not take it for more than 14 days.

Safety

Excessive use of bearberry can lead to stomach distress, and prolonged use can produce chronic poisoning. Some people may experience mild nausea after taking uva ursi.

Avoid taking acidic agents such as vitamin C or fruit juice, while using uva ursi. Do not take if you are pregnant or if you are lactating.

Arisaema Rhizome

Name: Jack-in-the-pulpit.

Biological Name: Arisaema consanguineum Araceae.

Other Names: Jack-in-the-pulpit, arisaema rhizome, tian nan xing.

Parts Used: Rhizome.

Remedies For

Analgesic, anticonvulsive, expectorant, sedative, antitumor this herb is used for cold, stubborn phlegm with a full distended feeling in the chest and difficult expectoration. It is also used for wind conditions that cause convulsions, paralysis, spasms, stroke, dizziness, or epilepsy. Chinese herbalists claim to have used it with success in some kinds of cancers and externally for suppurating sores and abscesses. When used externally, the unprepared root is indicated; otherwise it is used in its prepared form or with fresh ginger to counteract its toxic properties.

Dosage

4–9 grams.

Safety

Arisaema rhizome should not be used during pregnancy or by those with yin-deficient cough with dry phlegm.

Caution: This herb may be toxic.

Aristolochia Root

Name: Birthwort.

Biological Name: Aristolochia clematitis.

Other Names: Aristolochia root, upright birthwort, birthwort, ma dou ling.

Parts Used: Rootstock, flowering herb, fruit.

History

Birthwort is a remedy that goes back to the ancient Egyptians, who used it for snakebite. Early writings also indicate that it has long been used to promote uterine contractions during childbirth.

Remedies For

Diaphoretic, emmenagogue, febrifuge, oxytocic, stimulant.

Fruit: Expectorant, antitussive, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antifungal.

Birthwort has been used for abdominal complaints and menstrual problems. The

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decoction can be used externally for wounds and also for leg ulcers.

Chinese herbalists use the fruit when there is lung heat and inflammation, with or without deficiency, but with the presence of phlegm. For these conditions, it stops coughing and wheezing. It is also used internally to treat bleeding hemorrhoids.

Description

Birthwort is a perennial plant found growing around fences, thickets, field edges, and vineyards. The erect, yellow-green, somewhat sinuous stem grows to a height of 1 to 3 feet from a long, thin rootstock. The dark green leaves are kidney-shaped and short-petioled. The yellowish-green flowers appear in May and June.

Dosage

When the plant is in flower, use the entire plant, including the rootstock; otherwise use the rootstock alone.

Decoction: Use 2 tbsp. fresh plant (or rootstock) with 1 cup water. Boil for 10 minutes, then strain. Dosage as directed by a doctor.

Cold Extract: Use 2 tsp. plant or rootstock with 1 cup cold water. Let stand for 6 to 8 hours. Dosage as directed by a doctor.

Fruit: 3–9 grams.

Safety

CAUTION: BIRTHWORT CONTAINS A SUBSTANCE THAT ACTS SIMILAR TO THE POISONOUS ALKALOID COLCHICINE. DO NOT USE EXCEPT UNDER PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION.

Aristolochia fruit should not be used in cases of spleen deficiency with diarrhea or conditions of cold and deficiency with cough and wheezing.

ARJUN

Name: Arjuna Myrobalan.

Biological Name: Terminalia arjuna, Pentaptera glabra, Pentaptera angustifolia Combretaceae Family.

Other Names: Arjun, Arjuna, Arjuna Myrobalan, Arjuna-sadra, Attumarutu, Billimatti, Holematti, Kahu, Kukubha, Maochettu, Maruthu, Nirmaruthu, Rektarjuna, sadado,Sajadan, Sanmadat, Shardul, Tella-madoi, Tormatti, Vellai maruda-maram, Vella- marda, Yermaddi.

Description: Important Ayurvedic herb from India.

Constitution

The exact constitution of the bark is under dispute. It is possible that the different results reported by different investigators is because of the differences in the varieties of Arjuna. One investigator reported that the bark contained tannin including glucotannic acid 15%, a coloring matter, a glucosidal body and ash 34% containing sodium, pure calcium carbonates and traces of alkaline chlorides and traces of alkaline chlorides.

Other researchers reported that they could not find any alkaloid or glucoside in the bark. There was no substance of the nature of an essential oil. It contained unusually, large quantities of calcium salts with small amounts of aluminum and magnesium salts; about 12% of tannins, consisting mainly pyrocatechol tanning; an organic acid with a high melting point and a phytosterol; an organic ester easily-hydrolyzed by mineral

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acids; some—coloring matters, and sugars, etc.

The Root Contains

—sugar

—tannin

—coloring matter

—a body of the nature of a glucoside and

—carbonates of calcium and sodium and traces of chlorides of alkali metals.

The total tannin content amounted to 12% and the content of ash to 30%.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action

Alterative, astringent, cardiac stimulant, hemostatic, rejuvenative, tonic and lithontriptic.

Uses

The bark is used to heal wounds. It is also used in heart-disease, contusions, and fractures. Juice of leaves used in ear-aches. Best herb for heart disease (prevents and helps in the recovery of), angina and heals heart tissue scars after surgery.

Also useful for bile, edema, fractures, broken bones, diarrhea, malabsorption, and venereal disease. External treatment for ulcers, acne, skin disorders. Arjuna bark is used in the form of decoction (1 in 10) in doses of half to one ounce in hemorrhages and other fluxes also in diarrhea, dysentery and sprue. It is also useful in bilious affections ,and as an antidote to poisons. It is used as a remedy for scorpion-sting.

For Heart Diseases: Arjuna Heart Tonic is a decoction is highly recommended by Ayurveda physicians in heart diseases complicated with endocarditis, mitral regurgitation, pericarditis, angina, etc. It is prescribed for all sorts of conditions of cardiac failure and dropsy. The tonic made from bark is believed to have a stimulant effect on the heart.

For Fractures and Wound Healing.

For Treatment of Haemoptysis.

Combine pulverized Arjuna bark with equal quantity of pulverized red sandalwood, sugar and rice water. Take this internally.

For Ulcers, Sores, and Skin Diseases.

Arjuna leaves are used for covering ulcers and sores externally. An ointment prepared with Arjuna bark and honey is useful in acne.

For Spematorrhoea and in Gonorrhea.

Prepare a decoction from Arjuna bark and white sandalwood. Take this is for treating spematorrhoea and gonorrhea.

For Phthisis.

Soak powdered Arjuna bark in the leaf-juice of Adhatoda vasika. Dry. Repeat this process seven times.

Add honey, sugar-candy and cow's ghee. Mix well. Take this for phthisis. It stops the blood in the sputum and clears up the sores and cures them.

Safety

No information is available.

Heart disease is a very serious disease. Do not take this herb without the supervision of a qualified professional.

ARNICA

Name: Arnica.

Biological Name: Arnica montana.

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Family: Compositae.

Other Names: Arnica, Leopard's bane, mountain tobacco, mountain arnica, common arnica, wolfsbane.

Parts Used: Flowers, rootstock.

Remedies For

Diaphoretic, diuretic, emollient, expectorant, stimulant, vulnerary Reduce pain and swelling.

Diaphoretic, diuretic, emollient, expectorant, stimulant, vulnerary. Promotes the healing of wounds, bruises, and irritation. Caution: Use only very diluted tincture externally as it can cause inflammation and blistering when applied. Arnica is also used sometimes to relieve abdominal pains, when used as a poultice.

Description

A perennial that grows to a height of 1 to 2 feet. It is generally found in the mountainous parts. The basal leaves are oblong-ovate and short-petioled. The upper leaves are smaller and sessile. The flowers appear from June to August.

Dosage

Use professionally prepared remedies whenever possible. Do not take without the supervision of a doctor.

Safety

Do not use internally or externally. Internal use may cause great pain or even death; external use may irritate the skin.

Aromatic Wintergreen

Name: Wintergreen.

Biological Name: Gaultheria procumbens.

Other Names: Wintergreen, Canada tea, partridge berry, checkerberry, boxberry, wax cluster, spice berry, mountain tea, deerberry, spicy wintergreen, aromatic wintergreen, chink, ground berry, grouse berry, red pollom, redberry tea, hillberry, ivory plum.

Parts Used: Leaves.

Remedies For

Stimulant, antiseptic, astringent, diuretic, emmenagogue, aromatic. An old fashioned remedy. Taken in small, frequent doses, it will stimulate stomach, heart and respiration. Useful in chronic inflammatory rheumatism, rheumatic fever, sciatica, diabetes, all bladder troubles, scrofula, and skin diseases. Used for colic and gas in the bowels and for dropsy, gonorrhea, stomach trouble, and obstruction in the bowels the oil of wintergreen is used externally and internally. Useful for liniments.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Artemisia Annua

Name: Sweet Annie.

Biological Name: Artemisiae annuae Compositae.

Other Names: Sweet Annie, Qing hao, artemisia annua.

Parts Used: Leaves.

Remedies For

Antipyretic, antibacterial, antifungal, antimalarial.

Sweet Annie can be used for heat stroke

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symptoms, a wide variety of inflammatory conditions, including all kinds of fevers and for treating and preventing malaria.

Can be used both topically and internally for bacterial and fungal infections. It is one of a few anti-inflammatory herbs that can be used with symptoms of wasting and in deficiency.

Dosage

3–9 grams.

Safety

Sweet Annie should be avoided by those with diarrhea due to weak, cold spleen and stomach and by those without heat signs due to in deficiency.

ASAFETIDA

Name: Asafoetida.

Biological Name: Ferula asafoetida Umbelliferae.

Other Names: Asafoetida, asafetida, assafoetida, devil's dung, food of the gods.

History

Early records mention that Alexander the Great carried this spice west in 4 B.C. Used as a flavoring in the kitchens of the ancient Rome, this pungent, resinous gum is used widely in Indian vegetarian cooking.

Remedies For

Asafoetida is a useful antidote for flatulence. It is also claimed to be useful for the treatment of bronchitis and hysteria. Here are some traditional use of asafoetida in healing.

Asafoetida is Used for Stomach Pains: There are anecdotal evidence that strong stomach pains can be cured by taking asafoetida.

Asafoetida prevents insect bites: It repels mosquitoes, gnats, and other insects. It is described as the ultimate insect repellant. (More effective if you add some garlic to the mixture.).

Headache Remedy: A folk remedy very popular in Kazakstan is decoctions from pieces of the dried gum. It is often prescribed to patients suffering from excruciating headaches. John Heinenman, in his book, "healing Herbs and Spices" reported that asafoetida was found effective for tension headaches. He put 1/8 teaspoon crumbled dried asafoetida in 1–1/2 cups hot water and let simmer for 15 minutes before drinking. People using this reported positive effects against tension headaches.

Preventing Snakebites: Afghan people would rub small chunks of asafoetida over their boots to keep away deadly snakes or vipers in the environment they lived in.

Description

Asafoetida is the resinuous exudation from two species of the giant fennel. Its extremely foul odor has earned it the name, "devil's dung."

Ferula asafoetida, a perennial of the carrot family, grows wild to 12 feet high in huge natural forests. The plant is indigenous to Iran, Afghanistan and in the north of India. There is a smaller species called Ferula narthax. The whole plant exudes the characteristic strong smell. The milky resin comes from both the thick stems and the root, and it dries into asafoetida.

Dosage

Tincture: Put 2 oz. of the brown root gum powder in 6 oz. alcohol; let stand for 2

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weeks and shake once daily. Strain and pour the liquid into another bottle suitable for storage.

Uses

15–20 drops in 6 fluid ounces for severe stomach pains and similar gastrointestinal distresses.

ASARABACCA

Latin Name: Asarum europaeum.

Other Names: Black Snakeroot, Canada Snakeroot, European Snakeroot, False Coltsfoot, Hazelwort, Heart Snakeroot, Indian Ginger, Southern Snakeroot, Vermont Snakeroot, Wild Ginger.

A Remedy For

Asarabacca has shown promise as a remedy for asthma, cough, and bronchitis, but has yet to win official recognition as effective. It has also been used—without scientific validation—to induce vomiting, promote menstruation, trigger abortion, and relieve a variety of ailments, including eye inflammations, chronic sneezing, pneumonia, heart pain (angina), migraine, liver disease, and dehydration. In homeopathic medicine, it is recommended for nervous problems.

What It Is; Why It Works

This plant has a peculiarly unflattering name: it is thought to be derived from the Greek words "ase" for "disgust" and "sarao" for "dirty." Worse yet, the Renaissance herbalist Culpeper wrote that "it is a plant under the dominion of Mars and therefore inimical to nature. This herb being drank, not only provokes vomiting, but purges downwards." Despite this less than encouraging introduction, Asarabacca may well prove to be an effective remedy for bronchitis and bronchial asthma once additional tests have been conducted. Researchers have found that it loosens phlegm, calms bronchial spasms, and acts as a local anesthetic. A tiny (1- to 4-inch high) shaggy-haired plant, Asarabacca is found from central Europe to western Siberia, and is cultivated in the U.S. Although the leaves have been used in folk medicine, only an extract of the root is recommended for use today.

Avoid If...

Take only the extract; use of the natural dried root is not advised. Not for children under 12.

Special Cautions

Be aware that a compound in Asarabacca root has caused liver cancer in mice.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Since Asarabacca was once used to induce abortion, any use during pregnancy seems ill-advised.

How to Prepare

While obsolete in its natural form, Asarabacca can be found as a sneezing powder (20%) or as a purified dry extract in the form of coated tablets and pills.

Typical Dosage

For adults and children 13 and over, the usual dose of purified extract is 30 milligrams. Potency of commercial preparations may vary, so follow the individual manufacturer's directions. Coated tablets and pills may be stored in brown glass, away from light, for up to 2 years.

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Overdosage

Warning signs of overdose include burning of the tongue, stomach pain, diarrhea, skin rashes, and partial paralysis. If you suspect an overdose, seek medical attention immediately.

ASCLEPIAS

Name: Pleurisy Root.

Biological Name: Asclepias tuberosa Asclepiadaceae.

Other Names: Pleurisy Root, Butterfly Weed, wind root, Canada root, silkweed, orange swallow wort, tuber root, white root, flux root, asclepias.

Parts Used: Rhizome.

Active Compounds

—Cardenolides, including asclepiadin.

—Flavonoids; rutin, kaempferol, quercitin and isorhamnetin.

—Miscellaneous; friedalin, a- and b-amyrin, lupeol, viburnitol, choline sugars.

Remedies For

Diaphoretic, expectorant, anti-spasmodic, carminative, anti-inflammatory. Pleurisy Root is effective against respiratory infections where it reduces inflammations and assists expectoration. It can be used in the treatment of bronchitis and other chest condition. Highly valued in the treatment of pleurisy and pneumonia. Also used for influenza.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1/2–1 teaspoonful of the herb and let infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

ASIAN GINSENG

Name: Asian Ginseng.

Biological Name: Panax ginseng.

Other Names: Ginseng–Asian, Asiatic ginseng, Chinese ginseng, wonder of the world, Asian Ginseng.

Parts Used: Root.

Active Compounds

Ginseng's actions in the body are due to a complex interplay of constituents.

The primary group are the ginsenosides, which are believed to increase energy, counter the effects of stress, and enhance intellectual and physical performance. Thirteen ginsenosides have been identified in Asian ginseng. Ginsenosides Rgl and Rbl have received the most attention. Other constituents include the panaxans, which help lower blood sugar, and the polysaccharides (complex sugar molecules), which support immune function.

History

Asian ginseng has been a part of Chinese medicine for over 2,000 years. The first reference to the health enhancing use of Asian ginseng dates to the first century A.D. Historically, it had been described as: "It is used for repairing the five viscera, quieting the spirit, curbing the emotion, stopping

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agitation, removing noxious influence, brightening the eyes, enlightening the mind, and increasing wisdom. Continuous use leads one to longevity with light weight." Ginseng was commonly used by elderly persons in the Orient to improve mental and physical vitality.

Remedies For

Ginseng is Believed to be Helpful in:

—Aerobic capacity

—Alzheimer's disease

—Atherosclerosis

—Athletic performance

—Chemotherapy support

—Chronic fatigue syndrome

—Common cold/sore throat

—Diabetes

—Endurance and stress

—Fibromyalgia

—Influenza (flu)

—Male reproductive system support

Ginseng is a demulcent, panacea, stimulant, stomachic. The chines have held ginseng root in almost religious esteem as a panacea for all ailments for thousands of years. The roots that resemble a human being is the most prized ones.

Ginseng is considered valuable for feverish and inflammatory illnesses, for hemorrhage, and for blood diseases. Women also take it for everything from normalizing menstruation to easing childbirth. Ginseng promote both physical and mental vigor. It is believed to be an aphrodisiac. It promotes appetite and may help digestive disturbances. It is mildly stimulating to the central nervous system and to various glands. It is helpful for coughs, colds, and various chest problems.

Description

Asiatic ginseng is a small perennial plant which grows in the damp woodlands of Manchuria. It is cultivated primarily in Korea. The aromatic root commonly grows to a length of 2 feet or more and is often divided at the end. The simple, glabrous stem bears near the top a whorl of three or five palmately compound leaves consisting of five oblong ovate, finely double serrated leaflets. From June to August, the plant is topped by a solitary simple umbel of greenish yellow flowers. The fruit is a small red, edible, berry. Ginseng's high reputation in the orient ensures that the wild plant remains extremely rare; world trade in ginseng consists almost exclusively of cultivated plants.

Dosage

The best known clinical forms of ginseng are standardized herbal extracts that supply approximately 4–7% ginsenosides; more concentrated extracts may be less effective due to reduction of panaxan levels. People often take 100–200 mg per day. Nonstandardized extracts require a higher intake, generally 1–2 grams per day for tablets or 2–3 ml for fresh herb tincture. Use only thoroughly dried root. Make it into a tea according to your taste and use as needed. Ginseng is usually used for two to three weeks continuously, followed by a 1 to 2 -week "rest" period before resuming.

Safety

Used at the recommended dosage, ginseng is generally safe. In rare instances, it may cause over-stimulation and possibly

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insomnia. Consuming caffeine with ginseng increases the risk of over-stimulation and gastrointestinal upset. Persons with uncontrolled high blood pressure should not use ginseng. Long-term use of ginseng may cause menstrual abnormalities and breast tenderness in some women. Ginseng is not recommended for pregnant or lactating women.

Asiatic Dogwood

Latin Name: Cornus officinalis.

Other Name: Shan Zhu Yu.

A Remedy For

Asiatic Dogwood is a standard remedy in traditional Chinese medicine, where it is considered a tonic for the kidneys. It has typically been used for kidney, urinary, and liver disorders; impotence and low semen production; menstrual disorders; low back and knee pain; night sweats; and dizziness. Its effectiveness for these conditions has not, however, been proven.

What It Is; Why It Works

The Asiatic Dogwood tree is native to northeast China and Japan. The dried fruit of the tree is the part used medicinally, usually in combination with other herbs. In traditional Chinese medicine, imbalances between the energies of heat and cold and their respective states of dryness and moisture are thought to result in particular disease patterns. This herb is believed to help normalize conditions associated with body fluid imbalances.

The research on Asiatic Dogwood shows that it contains several compounds that may have therapeutic effects. The tannins it contains have an astringent, or tightening, action.

It is also capable of flushing excess water from the body and has been found to lower blood pressure. In the laboratory, Asiatic Dogwood improved sperm motility, an action which may prove useful in humans. When added to certain food products, it shows an ability to inhibit bacterial growth.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Asiatic Dogwood.

Special Cautions

At customary dosage levels, Asiatic Dogwood poses no known risks.

Possible Drug Interactions

Avoid combining Asiatic Dogwood with the water pills (diuretics) commonly used to treat high blood pressure.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

The dried fruit of Asiatic Dogwood is usually powdered and combined with other herbs or prepared as a tincture (liquid extract) for internal use by manufacturers of Chinese herbal products.

Typical Dosage

Typical dosages range from 3 to 12 grams daily, divided into smaller doses. Follow the package directions as dosage guidelines vary widely. Read the label carefully for other ingredients.

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Asparagus Root

Latin Name: Asparagus officinalis.

Other Name: Sparrow grass.

A Remedy For

—Kidney and bladder stones

—Urinary tract infections

Only the below-ground stem and the roots of the plant have documented medicinal value, although the above-ground parts have also been used. In Asian medicine, Asparagus Root is given for cough, diarrhea, and nervous problems, but its effectiveness for these conditions remains unverified.

What It Is; Why It Works

Used in its wild form in Ancient Greece and Rome, Asparagus is a natural diuretic that flushes out the kidneys and helps prevent the formation of kidney stones.

A perennial with a woody root stock, Asparagus grows from 1 to 5 feet high. The female Asparagus plant is slimmer than the male, which is shorter and stockier. Although the plant's berries are thought to be poisonous, there is no proof of this.

Avoid If...

Do not take Asparagus Root if you have kidney disease.

Special Cautions

If you have a weak heart or poor kidneys, do not attempt to flush out the urinary system with Asparagus Root or other diuretics. When using Asparagus, be sure to drink plenty of liquids.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Chopped Asparagus Root is used for teas.

Typical Dosage

Asparagus is taken orally. The usual daily dosage is 11/2 ounces to 22/3 ounces of the chopped stem and roots. Strengths of commercial preparations may vary. Follow the manufacturer's labelling whenever available.

Asthma Weed

Name: Lobelia.

Biological Name: Lobelia inflata Campanulaceae.

Other Names: Lobelia, Pukeweed, Indian tobacco, bladderpod, wild tobacco, emetic herb, emetic weed, lobelia herb, asthma weed, rag root, eye-bright, vomit wort.

Parts Used: Aerial parts.

Active Compounds

—Piperidine alkaloids, mainly lobeline, with lobelanidine, lobelanine, and minor amounts of norlobelanine (=isolobelanine), lelobanidine, lovinine, isolobinine, lobinanidine and others.

—Chelidonic acid.

—Miscellaneous; resins, gums, fats etc.

Remedies For

Anti-asthmatic, anti-spasmodic, expectorant, emetic, nervine, diaphoretic, diuretic.

Lobelia is one of the most useful systemic relaxants available. It has a general depressant action on the central and autonomic nervous

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system and on neuro-muscular action. It may be used in many conditions in combination with other herbs to further their effectiveness if relaxation is needed. Its primary specific use is in bronchitic asthma and bronchitis. Lobeline is a powerful respiratory stimulant, whilst isolobelanine is an emetic and respiratory relaxant, which will stimulate catarrhal secretion and expectoration whilst relaxing the muscles of the respiratory system. The overall action is a truly holistic combination of stimulation and relaxation.

Combinations: It will combine well with Cayenne, Grindelia, Pill-bearing Spurge, Sundew and Ephedra in the treatment of asthma.

Description: Native of Eastern USA.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoonful of the dried leaves and let infuse for 10–5 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1/2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

Lobelia may have some toxic effects and should not be taken internally without proper consultation. Safe to use externally.

No other information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

ASTRAGALUS

Name: Astragalus.

Biological Name: Astragalus membranaceus.

Family: Leguminosae.

Other Names: Huang qi, Astragalus.

Parts Used: Roots.

Active Compounds

Astragalus contains numerous components, including flavonoids, polysaccharides, triterpene glycosides (*e.g.*, astragalosides I–VII), amino acids, and trace minerals. Astragalus appears to restore T-cell (a specific type of white blood cell) counts to relatively normal ranges in some cancer patients.

History

Shen Nong, the founder of Chinese herbal medicine, classified astragalus as a superior herb in his classical treatise Shen Nong Pen Tsao Ching (circa A.D. 100). The Chinese name huang qi translates as "yellow leader," referring to the yellow color of the root and its status as one of the most important tonic herbs. Traditional Chinese medicine utilized this herb for night sweats, deficiency of chi (*e.g.*, fatigue, weakness, and loss of appetite), and diarrhea.

Remedies For

Immune tonic, diuretic, lowers blood pressure, Qi tonic.

Astragalus is useful for the treatment of:

—Alzheimer's disease

—Chemotherapy support

—Common cold/sore throat

—Immune function

Astragalus is the primary herb used in Chinese medicine to tone the immune system of the lungs. It is useful for conditions of immune deficiency that lead to spontaneous sweating. It is also used for spleen qi deficiency with

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symptoms of weak, low metabolism; edema; and prolapse of internal organs, as it raises the spleen yang and qi. It can be used for qi and blood deficiency caused by loss of blood or after childbirth.

Description

Astragalus is native to northern China and the elevated regions of the Chinese provinces Yunnan and Sichuan. The portion of the plant used medicinally is the four- to seven-year-old dried root collected in the spring. While there are over 2,000 types of astragalus world-wide, the Chinese version has been extensively tested, both chemically and pharmacologically'

Dosage

Textbooks on Chinese herbs recommend taking 9–15 grams of the crude herb per day in decoction form made by boiling the root in water for a few minutes and then brewing the tea. Supplements typically contain 500 mg of astragalus. Two to three tablets or capsules or 3–5 ml of tincture three times per day are often recommended.

Safety

Astragalus should not be used for cases of excess or when there is deficiency of in with heat signs, and it should not be used when there is stagnation of qi or dampness, especially when there is painful obstruction.

ATEICHA

Name: Indian Atees.

Biological Name: Aconitum hetrophyllum.

Ranunculaceae family.

Other Names: Indian Atees, Atis, Ativisha, Ataicha, Atavasa, Ateicha, Athivisha, Atirasa, Ativadayam, Ativasu, Bhangura, Pankura, Sitashringi, Upavishaaka, Vajji-turki; Vaj-turki, visha.

Description

Ayurvedic herb. Found in sub-alpine and alpine regions; Himalayas from Indus to Kumaon.

Constituents

—atisine—an intensely bitter alkaloid that is also non-toxic

—aconitinic acid

—tannic acid

—pectous substance

—starch

—fat

—a mixture of oleic, palmitic, stearic glycerides

—vegetable mucilage

—sugar

—ash (2%)

Parts Used: Dried tuberous roots.

Remedies For

Roots are bitter, astringent, stomachic, antiperiodic, carminative aphrodisiac, and tonic.

Useful For

—acute inflammations

—chronic fevers

—convalescing after fever

—cough

—debility

—diarrhea

—dysentery

—edema

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—Hemorrhoids
—indigestion
—liver disorders
—vomiting

Action and Uses in Ayurveda & Siddha

Katu tikta rasam, ushna veeryam, kapha pitta haram, dipanam, pachanam in athisaram, amadosham, kasam, visham, chardhi, krimi.

Action and Uses in Unani

Aphrodisiac, astringent, balgham, dropsy,stomachic, piles, vomiting.

Uses

Aconitum is a valuable herb for combating debility after fevers. It is an excellent tonic and aphrodisiac. It is used as a remedy for diarrhea, dysentery, acute inflammatory affections, cough, and dyspepsia.

For Fever

Several combination remedies using aconium are available.

Aconitum Fever Remedy: This Ayurvedic herbal remedy is useful for fever with diarrhea.

Aconite-Mustaka Home Remedy: This remedy is useful for fever, diarrhea and irritability of the stomach.

Balachatur Bhadraka: This Ayurvedic herbal remedy is useful for fever with diarrhea.

Hriveradi: This Ayurvedic herbal remedy is useful for fever with diarrhea.

For children with cough, coryza, fever and vomiting, often the plain powder of the tuberous root mixed with honey is given. Its dosage is dependent on age. The powder is applied to the tongue.

For bilious fever, 1 dr. of aconite root is mixed with 2 drs. of Bonduc nut; the mix is powdered (fine powder).

Dose: 10 to 20 grs. During intermissions of feverish attacks, the following home remedy is often recommended. Take 1 dr. each of aconite root, chiretta, Cyperus rotundus and Delphinum denudatum. Add 2 drs. of Cocculus cordifolius. Combine and mix well all the ingredients. Make it to a fine powder. *Dose*: 1/2 to 1 dr.

Dosage

Tincture: (1 in 8). *Dose:* 10 to 30 minims

Decoction: Powder of Root, *Dose*: 10 to 30 grains.

ATIBALA

Name: Country mallow.

Biological Name: Sida Rhombifolia Malvaceae family.

See Also: Sida cordifolia, Sida Spinosa.

Other Names: Atibala, Athiballached, Bala, Kehetara-ubal-dana, Khangi, Kheriti, Kisangihettutti-gida, Kotikanbevila, Kulbahebari, Kurunthotti, Lalbariela, Mahabala, Mayir manikkam, Mutheera pulagam, Sadeva, Sap-devi, Shamblidebari, Sirramutti, Svetberela, Tupkadi, Vadha, Velluram, Yellow barleria.

Description

These are weeds very common in India and Sri Lanka in the dry country.

Parts Used: Roots, stems

Remedies For

The Sida species is one of the most important family of medicinal plants in India.

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Action & Uses in Ayruveda & Siddha

Mathura tikta rasam, seetha veeryam, mathura vipakam, snigdam, tridosha haram, nutritive, tonic, asthi jwaram, excess pittam, good for eyes, used for preparing tailams. Seeds are used in gonorrhoea.

Action & Uses in Unani

Leaves and roots are used, piles, gonorrhoea, anti-soud, diuretic, aphrodisiac. Root of these herbs are held in great repute in treatment of rheumatism. Stems abound in mucilage and are employed as demulcents and emollients both for external and internal use.

The herb is also useful in calculous troubles and as a febrifuge with pepper. Mucilage is used for scorpion sting.

ATMAGUPTA

Name: Cowitch.

Biological Name: Mucuna pruriens, Mucuna prutita, Carpopogon pruiens, Dolichos pruiens.

Other Names: Cowitch, Cowhage plant, kavach, Kapikachhu, Atmagupta Naikaranam, Kawanch, Kewach.

Description

This herb is an annual climbing shrub found in the tropics of India. Golden brown, velvety legumes are produced by the plant. These are eaten as a vegetable. The hairs on the pods produce intense irritation of the skin.

Parts Used: Seeds, root, legumes.

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES

Action

Herb—anthelmintic, aphrodisiac, astringent, nervine, tonic, rejuvenative.

Seeds—antihelmintic, astringent, nervine tonic, and an aphrodisiac.

Root—nervine tonic, diuretic. Hairs on the.

Pods—irritant, powerful vermifuge *Uses* Infusion of the pods is a good remedy for dropsy.

The seeds are used in leucorrhoea, menorrhagia, spermatorrhoea, Parkinson's and as an aphrodisiac. They are one of the best tonics and used as powder to improve vitality. Root is used as a remedy in facial paralysis and nervous disorders. Decoction of the roots purifies the blood, cures rheumatism, asthma, cough, stone in the bladder and improves vitality. it is also used for fevers, edema, and elephantiasis. Leaf paste is applied to ulcers. This herb is being investigated as a possible remedy for AIDS.

Dosage

Decoction, powder, confections.

Safety

Do not use when congested.

No information about the safety of this herb is available.

Use caution. Ayurvedic herbs are often taken in combination to neutralize the toxicity one herb with the opposing effect of other. Do not take except under the supervision of a qualified professional.

AUTUMN CROCUS

Name: Autumn Crocus.

Biological Name: Colchicum autumnale Lily family, Liliaceae.

Other Names: Autumn Crocus, Colchicum, Meadow Saffron, Naked Ladies, upstart.

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Parts Used: Bulb, seeds.

Active Compounds: Colchicine, an alkaloid, relieves pain and inflammation of gout.

Remedies For

Contains the poisonous alkaloid colchicine, which is used medicinally for gout and arthritis. The whole plant is poisonous. Even small amounts of the bulb or seeds can cause death.

DO NOT USE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE.

Description

Autumn crocus is a perennial herb that is found in damp meadows, fields, woodlands, and mountainous areas. It grows to a height of 1 foot. Large, lance shaped leaves develop in spring, and envelop the previous year's seed pot. In the fall, a leafless flowering stalk produces white to pale purple crocus like flower in August to October.

Dosage

See the warning below. Not recommended for use.

Safety

Warning: Ingestion of any part of the plant may cause death. The bulb may be mistaken for an onion. Symptoms are a burning sensation in the throat and vomiting, followed by kidney and respiratory failure.

AVA

Name: Kava.

Biological Name: Piper methysticum.

Other Names: Kava Kava, Kava, ava, awa, ava pepper, intoxicating pepper, kawa, kew, tonga.

Parts Used: The medicinal parts are the peeled, dried, cut rhizome, which has normally been freed from the roots and the fresh rhizome with the roots.

Active Compounds:

Kava lactones (kava pyrones, 5–12%): chief components (+) -kavain, 7,8-dihydro-(+)-kavain (marindinine), (+) -methysticin, 7,8-dihydro-(+)-methysticin, yangonine, desmethoxyyangonin. The kava-lactones, sometimes referred to as kava-pyrones, are important active constituents in kava herbal extracts. High quality kava rhizomes contain 5.5–8.3% kava-lactones. Medicinal extracts used in Europe contain 30–70% kava-lactones.

History

Kava is native Pacific Islands. In early times, it was distributed eastward through tropical islands by migrating people, who valued the root both as a drink and a medicine. In Hawaii, more than 15 varieties were known. In many islands of the Pacific, Kava has long played an important part in the life of the people, being used in ceremonies, festivals, and as a sign of good will.

The root is used to prepare the ceremonial drink. The drink is reputed to be sedative, aphrodisiac, tonic, stimulant, diuretic, and diaphoretic. The root has a faint but characteristic odor, an aromatic, bitter, pungent taste, with a slight local anesthesia resulting.

Remedies For

Anxiety and Insomnia

Also for nervousness, stress, and restlessness. Kava-lactones may have anti-anxiety, analgesic (pain relieving), muscle relaxing,

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and anticonvulsant effects. Studies suggest that kava directly influences the limbic system, the ancient part of the brain associated with emotions and other brain activities.

Whereas benzodiazepine tranquilizers can be addictive, impair memory, and worsen a depression, kava improves mental functioning and mood and is not addictive.

In a 1996 randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind study, two groups of 29 patients with anxiety syndromes were treated with 100 mg of kava extract standardized to 70-percent kavalactones three times a day for four weeks.

The symptoms of anxiety were significantly reduced in patients taking kava as compared to placebo. No adverse reactions were observed in the kava group. In a 1997 multi-center, randomized, placebo-controlled study, a total of 101 outpatients were given one capsule of a kava extract containing 70 mg of kavalactones or placebo three times daily.

In this twenty-five-week study, all the patients suffered from moderate to severe anxiety, including agoraphobia, generalized anxiety disorder, specific phobia, and social phobia.

The results showed that the short- and long-term effectiveness of kava was superior to that of placebo. After twenty-four weeks, over half of the kava group were rated as "very improved": anxiety, fear, tension, and insomnia decreased steadily with treatment. Kava was well tolerated, and adverse reactions were mild and rare.

The researchers concluded that kava was a treatment alternative to both benzodiazepines and synthetic antidepressants for anxiety disorders.

Description

Kava is a member of the pepper family and is native to many Pacific Ocean islands. The rhizome (root stock) is used.

Dosage

Take extract supplying 140–210 mg of kava-lactones per day. Alternatively, 1–3 ml of fresh liquid kava tincture can be taken.

Kava pills come in different strengths, usually from 100 to 250 mg, and the percentage of kavalactones (the active chemicals in kava) in the extract can vary from 50 to 70 percent. The dosage used in most clinical studies for anxiety is three daily 100 mg doses of kava extract standardized to 70-percent kavalactone content, which research has shown can be as effective as the benzodiazepine drug Serax (oxazepam), 15 mg daily. A 70-percent kava extract is not yet commercially available in the United States.

Enzymatic Therapy has a 150-mg capsule of a 55-percent kava extract, which would contain 82.5 mg of kavalactones. It is best to begin with a total daily dosage of 70 to 85 mg of kavalactones, taken in the evening. Stay on one capsule if it effectively reduces anxiety. If it is not enough, you can add a second pill in the morning.

Remain on this twice daily dosage for at least a week. If you still feel tense or fearful after that, add a third capsule in the middle of the day. When you consistently feel more relaxed, gradually decrease your dosage by one pill every few days.

Do not take kava on a daily basis for longer than twenty-five weeks (four to six

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months). When used in small amounts on an occasional basis, it can be used longer, if necessary. If 70 to 85 mg of kavalactones three times a day is not effective for your anxiety, see your doctor for a reevaluation to see if taking more kava is indicated or if you may require a prescription drug.

Safety

The US Food and Drug Administration has warned consumers that kava may be linked to serious liver injury.

FDA recommends that kava users should consult a doctor if they experience any possible symptoms of liver disease. These include jaundice, or yellowing of the skin or eyes; brown urine; nausea or vomiting; light-colored stool; unusual tiredness or weakness; stomach or abdominal pain; or loss of appetite. People who already have liver problems should ask a doctor before taking kava. Due these complications of Kava, it has been banned in some countries such as Canada.

Serious toxic reactions can develop when kava is not used with care. High doses can cause:

—Visual and skin problems

—Muscle weakness

—Disorders of complex movement, accompanied by undisturbed consciousness

—Tiredness

—Sleepiness

—Central nervous system depression

—Breathing problems

If kava is used over extended periods of time, a syndrome referred to as "kawaism" or "kawa dermopathy" may develop, with such symptoms as:

—Reddened eyes

—Scaly skin eruptions

—Yellowish discoloration of skin, hair, and nails

Heavy users of kava are likely to experience health problems such as:

—Rashes

—Puffiness in the face

—Weight loss

—Blood in the urine

—Blood abnormalities

These may be aggravated by the heavy use of alcohol and cigarettes.

At ten times the recommended dosage, consumed for many months, some heavy drinkers of kava root in the Polynesian islands have developed a scaly eruption or yellowing of the skin associated with muscle spasms, biochemical abnormalities, vision disturbances, and even shortness of breath. These disturbances go away quickly when kava is discontinued. Large intake of kava is unnecessary and strongly discouraged. At the recommended therapeutic levels, no such side effects have been reported.

In recommended doses, some people may experience mild gastrointestinal disturbances. Do not take kava if you are taking other medication or substances that also act on the central nervous system, such as alcohol, barbiturates, antidepressants, and antipsychotic drugs.

Unless you are under medical supervision, do not combine kava with benzodiazepine tranquilizers. It has been reported that a

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patient became disoriented and lethargic after combining Xanax (alprazolam) and kava, requiring brief hospitalization. If you are taking a synthetic tranquilizer, you should be gradually withdrawn from it under medical supervision before beginning kava.

Don't take Kava if you are suffering from Parkinson's disease, because it might worsen muscular weakness and twitching. Some people suffer an allergic reaction to kava. Care should be taken when driving or operating machinery.

People who are elderly or medically ill should take smaller doses of kava and only under a doctor's supervision. Kava is not recommended during pregnancy or breast-feeding or for severe anxiety disorders and depression. Do not take kava if you are diagnosed with clinical depression; it increases the danger of suicide.

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B

BABCHI

Name: Babchi.

Biological Name: Psoralea corylifolia Papilionaceae family.

Other Names: Babchi, Bakuchi, Babchi Seeds, Bavachi, Bavanchalu, Bavanchi Bavchi, Bhavanchi-vittulu, Bawachi, Bhavaj, Bobawachi, Bogi-vittulu, Hakuchi, Kantaka, Karpokarishi, Karu-bogi, Krishnaphala, Latakasturi, Somaraji, Sugandha kantak, Vabkuchi, Vakuchi.

Description

This is an Ayurvedic herb. It is found in many parts of India.

Parts Used: Seeds.

Constituents

The chief active principle of the seeds is an essential oil; and a fixed oil, a resin, and traces of a substance of alkaloidal nature.

Remedies For

Aromatic, anthelmintic, antibacterial, antifungal, diuretic, diaphoretic, laxative, stimulant, aphrodisiac.

Action & Uses in Ayurveda & Siddha

Mathura tikta rasam, katu-vipakam, seetha veeryam, kapha-haram, rasayanam, ruksham, hrithyam, in meham, kushtam, jwaram, krimi, rakta-pittam.

Action & Uses in Unani

Skin conditions, particularly leucoderma, anti-souda, balghami, fevers, anthelmintic, sedative for internal ulcers.

Dosage

Five grams powder twice daily before meals with some coriander and honey (to taste); as an external paste.

Uses

A Top Herb for Leprosy, Skin Conditions.

This herb has been considered by Ayurveda doctors to be so effective in the treatment of leprosy that it was given the name of 'Kushtanashini' (leprosy destroyers).

The powder from the seed is used to treat leprosy and leucoderma internally. It is also applied in the form of paste or ointment externally.

The unsaponified oil has been used with success in case of leucoderma and psoriasis.

It was shown to improve the color of skin (including removing white spots), hair, and nails.

An ointment made by combining one part of an alcoholic extract of the seeds with two parts of chaulmugra oil and two parts of lanoline has been found to be effective in treating leucoderma, white leprosy, psoriasis, and other inflammatory skin diseases and

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febrile conditions. The oil can be used both internally or as a simple ointment externally. Gently rub the oil once or twice daily. The proportion of the active ingredients may be increased if needed.

Seeds are also used to make a perfumed oil. They are also used for scorpion sting, and snake-bite.

Safety

Precautions: May increase Pitta when taken alone; do not take with low body fluids; do not use with licorice root.

The essential oil varies enormously in its effects on different persons. With the majority (95 percent) of people, it causes only redness of the leucodermal patches. But in a small number (5 percent) there is extreme sensitiveness to the oil.

It may even cause blistering of the skin. The strength of the oil should therefore be varied in such a way as not to allow its action to go beyond the state of redness of the leucodermic patches.

BACH

Name: Calamus.

Biological Name: Acorus calamus Aroideae family.

Other Names: Calamus, Vacha, Bach Agri-turki, Baje.

Description

Calamus is found all over the world. It is a semi-aquatic perennial cultivated in damp marshy places in India and Burma. Exceedingly common in Manipur and the Naga Hills of India, and on the edges of lakes and streams.

Flower and Fruit: Green flowers, like small dice, form a tightly packed, slim, conical spadix. The plant does not produce any fruit. It propagates from the rhizome.

Leaves, Stem and Root: The plant grows from 60 to 100 cm tall. The stem is triangular and sprouts from a horizontal, round root-stock, which has the thickness of a thumb. The upper shoot forms a grooved flower sheath. The leaves are oblong, sword-shaped and arranged in two rows. The leaves have no stems.

Characteristics: The rhizome has an intensely aromatic fragrance and a tangy, pungent and bitter taste. The leaves often undulate on the margins.

Constituents

Contains: Acorin—a volatile essential oil. It is a honey-like liquid, very bitter and aromatic, soluble in alcohol, chloroform, ether, splitting into sugar and volatile oil.

Acoretin (choline)—a bitter principle. It is a resin-like body.

Calamine (useful in dysentery): It is a crystalline alkaloid soluble in alcohol and chloroform.

—starch

—mucilage

—a little of tannin.

The dried rhizome yields 1.5 percent to 2.7 percent of a neutral, yellow, aromatic, essential oil. The fresh aerial parts yield about 0.123 percent of the volatile oil. The unpeeled roots yield the most—from 1.5 to 3.5 percent.

The essential volatile oil of Acorus Calamus is yellowish-brown, and is found to be

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composed of asaryl aldehyde, free normal heptylic and palmitic acid, eugenol, esters of acetic and palmitic acids, pinene, camphene, sesqui-terpene, calamene, and a small quantity of phenol, Eugenol, Methyl Eugenol, Cilamenenol and Calameone.

The chief constituents are heavily dependent upon the chemical strain (di-, tri-, tetraploid); beta-asarone (cis-isoasarone), alpha- and gamma-asarone, beta- gurjuns, acorone (bitter), ZZ-Deca-4,7-dienal (odor-determining).

Healing Properties

Parts Used: Dried rhizome.

Action: Calamus is an aromatic, bitter stomachic, which stimulates appetite and digestion and is a stomach tonic. It has spasmolytic, carminative and sedative effects, in addition to being externally hyperemic.

Root and Rhizome: stimulant, emetic, nauseant, stomachic, aromatic, expectorant, carminative, antispasmodic and nervine sedative.

In large doses (30 to 40 grains) it produces a violent and persistent emesis.

In the form of infusion it is tonic, stomachic or carminative, also anti-periodic.

—The volatile oil

—Aromatic and antiseptic.

The rhizome has an expectorant action, due to the presence of the essential oil.

Action and Uses in Ayurveda and Siddha Katu rasam. tiktanursam, ushna-veeryam, vata-haram. emetic. Improves agni, clears urine and stools.

Action and Uses in Unani

Cleans brain, aphrodisiac, strength to sight, expels reeh, expels balgam, antipoison, paralysis, dropsy and nervous complaints, digestive, cold, coughs.

Action and Uses in Herbal Medicine

This herb is used in the form of teas for dyspeptic disorders, gastritis, and ulcers. It is used externally for rheumatism, gum disease, and angina.

Useful For

—angina
—arthritis
—asthma
—diarrhea
—colds
—colic pain
—cough
—deafness
—dyspepsia
—epilepsy
—fever
—flatulence
—gastritis
—gum disease
—hysteria
—insanity
—laryngitis
—loss of appetite
—nasal congestion
—neuralgia
—rheumatism
—shock
—sinus headaches
—sinusitis
—ulcers

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Swami Thirtha calls this herb as "one of the best mind herbs." It removes the toxic effects of marijuana from the liver and brain.

Asthma: Give small doses of 10 grains of this herb. Repeated every two or three hours till relief is obtained.

For Headaches and Arthritic Joint Pain: Apply paste of the herb to head.

For Flatulant Colic: Mix the root burnt to cinder, with cocoanut or castor oil. Smear this paste over the abdomen.

For Infantile Diarrhea and Colic: Use the powder of the burnt root-stock in 3 grain doses. This herb is a very old remedy for chronic diarrhea and forms part of a number of remedies used in Ayurveda.

Dosage

Decoction: Milk decoction, powder, paste.

To Make Tea: Steep with hot water. For use in a bath, add 250 to 500 gm of the drug to the bath water.

Safety

CAUTION: DO NOT USE WITH BLEEDING DISORDERS (*E.G.*, NOSEBLEEDS, HEMORRHOIDS). EXCESS USE MAY CAUSE NAUSEA, VOMITING, RASHES, ETC. NO HEALTH HAZARDS OR SIDE EFFECTS ARE KNOWN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PROPER ADMINISTRATION OF DESIGNATED THERAPEUTIC DOSAGES OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN (TRIPLOID STRAIN, UP TO 15% BETA-ASARONE IN VOLATILE OIL). LONG-TERM USE OF THIS HERB SHOULD BE AVOIDED. MALIGNANT TUMORS APPEARED IN RATS THAT RECEIVED INDIAN KALMUS OILS OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD (TETRAPLOID STRAIN, OVER 80% 13-ASARONE IN VOLATILE OIL). NO OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE SAFETY OF THIS HERB IS AVAILABLE. USE CAUTION. AYURVEDIC HERBS ARE OFTEN TAKEN IN COMBINATION WITH OTHERS TO NEUTRALIZE THE TOXICITY ONE HERB WITH THE OPPOSING EFFECT OF OTHER. DO NOT TAKEEXCEPTUNDERTHESUPERVISION OF A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL.

BAEL

Name: Bael.

Biological Name: Aegle marmelos Rutaceae.

Other Names: Bael, Bilwa, Belaphal Baci fruit, Koovalam, Sreephal, Vilva, Vilvam.

Description

This ayurvedic herb is found throughout India from the sub-Himalayan forests to Burma (Myanmar).

Parts Used: Fruit, root-bark, leaves, rind, flowers.

Constitution

The fruit, root-bark, leaves, rind of the ripe fruit and flowers. Contains a bitter principle, volatile oils, pectin and tannin. The wood-ash is rich in minerals and phosphates.

Remedies For

Action: Antibilious, antiparasitical, antipyretic, aphrodisiac, aromatic, alterative, astringent; digestive stimulant, febrifuge, hemostatic, laxative, nutritive, stomachic, stimulant, tonic. Ripe fruit is sweet, aromatic, cooling, alterative and nutritive. Fresh fruit has laxative properties. Unripe

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fruit is astringent, digestive, stomachic, and constipative. Pulp is stimulant, antipyretic and antiscorbutic. Fresh juice is bitter and pungent.

Uses

—habitual constipation

—diabetes

—dyspepsia

—chronic diarrhea

—heart diseases

—dysentery

Decoction of the root and stem-bark is used in the palpitation of the heart. Leaf-juice is reported to have multifarious medicinal uses, including control of diabetes.

BAHUPATRA

Name: Bhuamalaki.

Biological Name: Phyllanthus niruri, Phyllanthus urinaria, Phyllanthus amarus

Other Names: Bhuamalaki, Bhuy amalaki, Niruri, Bhuiamla, Bahupatra, Bhuiavala, Bhulamla, Bhumyaamlaki, Bhuta-dhatri, Bhuyavali, Herbe due chagrin, Jaramla, Kilanelli, Kirunelli, Kizhkay nelli, Nela usirika, Phyllanthe niruri, Weisse Blatt-blume.

Description

This herb, used in ayurveda, is a perennial herb found in Central and Southern India, to Sri Lanka. It can grow to 12–24 inches in height and blooms with many yellow flowers. All parts of the plant are employed therapeutically. Phyllanthus species are also found in other countries, including China (*e.g.*, Phyllanthus urinaria), the Philippines, Cuba, Nigeria, and Guam.

Parts Used: Leaves, root, whole plant.

Active Compounds

Phyllanthus primarily contains lignans (*e.g.*, phyllanthine and hypophyllanthine), alkaloids, and bioflavonoids (*e.g.*, quercetin). While it remains unknown as to which of these ingredients has an anti-viral effect, research shows that this herb acts primarily on the liver. This action in the liver confirms its historical use as a remedy for jaundice.

History

Phyllanthus has been used in Ayurvedic medicine for over 2,000 years and has a wide number of traditional uses. This includes employing the whole plant for jaundice, gonorrhea, frequent menstruation, and diabetes and using it topically as a poultice for skin ulcers, sores, swelling, and itchiness. The young shoots of the plant are administered in the form of an infusion for the treatment of chronic dysentery.

Healing Applications

Actions: Bitter, astringent, de-obstruent, stomachic.

The plant is considered deobstruent, diuretic, astringent and cooling.

Uses

Hepatitis: Phyllanthus blocks DNA polymerase, the enzyme needed for the hepatitis B virus to reproduce. Fifty-nine percent of those infected with chronic viral hepatitis B lost one of the major blood markers of HBV infection (*e.g.*, hepatitis B surface antigen) after using phyllanthus for thirty days. While clinical studies on the outcome of phyllanthus and HBV have been mixed, the species P. urinaria and P. niruri seem to work far better than P. amarus.

Jaundice: Use the decoction of the plant.

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Whole plant is useful for the treatment of some forms of dropsy, gonorrhea, menorrhagia and other genito-urinary affections of a similar type. A poultice of the leaves mixed with salt cures itch and other skin affections. The other applications of the herb include treatments For diabetes, dyspepsia, ulcers, sores, swellings, ophthalmia, and chronic dysentery.

Dosage

Infusion, juice, poultice, powder, pill.

Research has utilized the powdered form of phyllanthus in amounts ranging from 900–2,700 mg per day for three months.

Safety

No side effects have been reported when using phyllanthus as recommended.

Bai Bu

Name: Stemona root.

Biological Name: Radix stemonae Stemonaceae.

Other Names: Stemona root, bai bu.

Parts Used: Root.

Remedies For

Demulcent, antitussive, antifungal, antiparasitic.

Because of its lubricating and nutritive properties, stemona root is useful for acute or chronic coughs. This herb can also be employed to expel parasites.

Dosage: 3–9 grams.

Safety

Stemona root should not be used when there is spleen and stomach deficiency with diarrhea.

Bala

Name: Country Mallow.

Biological Name: Sida cordifolia, Sida herbacea, Sida althaeitolia, Sida rotundifolia.

See Also: Sida Rhombifolia, Sida Spinosa.

Other Names: Country Mallow, Bala, Bariar, Batyalaka, Beejband, Bijband, Brela, Chikana, Chiribenda, Chitimutti, Hettutigida, Janglimethi, Kharenti, Khareti, Kisangi, Kungyi, Mayir-manikham, Muttuva, Paniyartutti, Simak, Tupkaria, Tutturabenda, Velluram.

Description

Grows wild along roadsides throughout the tropical and sub-tropical plains of India and Sri Lanka. An Ayurvedic herb.

Constitution

Alkaloids: The whole plant (including leaves, seeds.. stems and roots) contains about 0.085%. The seeds contain 0.32% of alkaloid. The seeds contain more alkaloids that that is found in either the stems, roots or leaves.

—fatty oil

—phytosterol

—mucins

—potassium nitrate

—resins

—resin acids

—no tannin or glucoside is found.

The main portion of the alkaloid identified to be ephedrine, an alkaloid that is observed in the different varieties of Ephedra.

Parts Used: Roots, leaves, seeds and stems

Medicinal and Healing Applications

Analgesic, aphrodisiac, demulcent, diuretic,

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nervine, rejuvenative, stimulant, tonic, vulnerary.

Roots of these species are: aromatic, astringent, bitter, cooling, demulcent, diuretic, febrifuge, stomachic, and tonic.

Indian scientists in 1930 reported the presence of a sympathomimetic alkaloid in this herb whose pharmacological action closely resembled that of ephedrine and they thought that the alkaloid was undoubtedly ephedrine. Later work has shown that the sympathomimetic alkaloid had showed all the chemical and physical characteristics of ephedrine. This explains the widespread use of this herb in Ayurveda as a cardiac stimulant. The seeds are considered to be aphrodisiac. Scientists have also reported that the pharmacological action of this herb caused marked and persistent rise of blood pressure in anaesthetised or decerebrated animals.

Useful For

—acial paralysis

—arthritis

—asthma

—bronchitis

—cancer, for strengthening before and after chemotherapy

—chronic inflammation, for healing tissues of

—convalescence

—cystitis

—dysentery

—emaciation

—exhaustion

—fevers

—heart disease

—insanity

—joint diseases

—leukorrhea

—muscle cramps

—nerve pain

—neuralgia and nerve inflammation

—numbness

—rheumatism, chronic

—sciatica

—sexual debility

—skin disorders

—stimulant, as a

—tumors

—ulcers

—wounds

Dosage and Uses

Decoction: Powder, medicated oil.

For serious illness like cancer, use one or more ounces daily.

—Application

—Roots

Roots are given in infusion for nervous and urinary diseases, disorders of the blood and bile, bleeding piles, gonorrhea, cystitis, leuccorrhoea, chronic dysentery, nervous diseases such as insanity, facial paralysis, and asthma. It is also used as a cardiac tonic. Dose is from 1/2 to 2 drachms. Mashabaladi Kvatha is an Ayurvedic remedy that contains Sida cordifolia. It is used for hemiplegia, stiff-neck, facial paralysis and noise in the ears with headache.

Another Ayurvedic herbal oil that contains Sida cordifolio is Balataila (Bala Taila, Bala

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Thailam). It is used for nervous diseases, facial paralysis, and sciatica. It is very efficacious in curing those diseases when they are due to inflammation of the nerves. It is also used as a cardiac tonic.

Root juice is used to promote the healing of wounds. In combination with other herbs it is also used for increasing sexual power.

For Intermittent Fever Attended with Cold Shivering Fits: Use a decoction of the Sida cordifolia root and ginger.

For Elephantiasis: Pound the root of Sida cordifolia into a paste. Mix it with the juice of pahuyrah tree. Apply externally.

For the Relief of Leucorrhoea: Take powdered root-bark of Sida cordifolia mixed well with milk and sugar.

Dhanwantri Tailam (21 and 101 times boiled) is an Ayurvedic herbal oil that contains S. cordifolia and 47 other substances prepared in milk. It is recommended for all disorders produced by the derangement of vata dosha, emaciation, weakness, diseases of generative organs, paralysis and rheumatism. This oil was clinically proven to be effective for neuralgia. Recommended dose of the oil is quarter tola taken in cumin-seed decoction.

Prabhanjana Vimardhana is a compound liniment made up of S. cordifolia and the five bigger roots of dashamula. It is used for external application in sciatica and neuritis of legs attended with pain.

Leaves

Leaves of this herb are mucilaginous and used as a demulcent and with other cooling leaves are applied in ophthalmia. Leaves mixed with rice are given to alleviate the bloody flux. In infusion they are prescribed in fevers as a cooling medicine and to check bloody fluxes. When fresh, they are bruised and applied to boils to promote suppuration. Leaves are cooked and eaten in cases of bleeding piles.

Seeds

Seeds are used in gonorrhoea, cystitis, piles, colic and tenesmus. Boiled milk whisked with fibrinous twigs coagulates. The fluid is decanted and is given internally for piles.

Whole Herb

Juice of the whole plant pounded with a little water is given for spermatorrhoea, rheumatism and gonorrhea. Dose: 1/4 seer.

Roots, leaves and seeds are all used in Ayurveda as a stomachic and as a cardiac tonic.

Safety

Caution: Do not take in excess if congested.

This herb contain ephedrine, an ingredient found in ephedra. Although no reported safety risk exists for this herb, ephedra has been found to be dangerous and can cause death if not used properly. Please read the information in holisticonline.com about the risks of ephedra. No other information available. Do not take this herb without the supervision of a qualified professional.

BALA-TAGRA

Name: Indian Valerian.

Biological Name: Valeriana wallichii, Valeriana leschenauitic, Valeriana brunoniana.

Other Names: Indian Valerian, Tagara, Tagar, Bala-tagra, Sugandh-bala.

Description: This herb is found in India, Bhutan, and Afghanistan.

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Parts Used: Rhizome (root) Medicinal Applications.

Actions: Analeptic, antispasmodic, carminative, sedative, stimulant, stomachic, nervine.

Uses

—colic
—convulsions
—cough
—nervous debility
—delirium
—dysmenorrhea
—epilepsy
—fainting
—gas
—hysteria
—insomnia
—menstrual cramps
—migraine
—nervous exhaustion
—neuralgia
—palpitations
—chronic skin disorders
—spasms
—stress
—vertigo

This herb also cleanses undigested toxins from the colon, blood, joints, and nerves.

Dosage

Infusion, decoction, powder, pills.

Safety

CAUTION: EXCESSIVE USE MAY DULL THE MIND, MAY CAUSE CENTRAL PARALYSIS, AND OTHER SEVERE CONDITIONS. USE ONLY UNDER THE DIRECTION OF A QUALIFIED PRACTITIONER. NOT RECOMMENDED.

No other information of the safety of this herb is available.

BALASMODENDRON

Name: Myrrh.

Biological Name: Balasmodendron myrrha, Commiphora Myrrha, Burseraceae.

Other Names: Myrrh, bola, bol, Balasmodendron.

Parts Used: The oleo-gum-resin from the stem.

Active Compounds

Volatile oil, containing heerabolene, cadinene, elemol, eugenol, cuminaldehyde, numerous furanosesquiterpenes including furanodiene, furanodienone, curzerenone, lindestrene, 2-methoxy furanodiene and other derivatives.

Resins including a-, b- and g-commiphoric acids, commiphorinic acid, heeraboresene, a- and b-heerabomyrrhols and commiferin. Gums, composed of arabinose, galactose, xylose and 4-O-methylglucuronic acid Sterols etc.

History

Myrrh is referred to in the Bible. It was used by Egyptians in embalming mixtures. It was used as an aromatic for perfumes, funerals, and insect repellents. It is used today as an aid to repel tooth decay and gum disease. Ancient Greek and Roman physicians used the herb to treat wounds and prescribed it internally as a digestive aid and menstruation promoter.

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Contemporary herbalists recommend adding powdered myrrh to well-washed wounds as an antiseptic and consider a gargle made from the herb effective against sore throat, colds, sore teeth and gums, coughs, asthma, and chest congestion.

Remedies For

Anti-microbial, astringent, carminative, anti-catarrhal, expectorant, vulnerary, alterative, analgesic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, emmenagogue, expectorant, stimulant, rejuvenative. Myrrh is an effective anti-microbial agent that has been shown to work in two complementary ways. Primarily it stimulates the production of white blood corpuscles (with their anti-pathogenic actions) and secondarily it has a direct anti-microbial effect.

Myrrh may be used in a wide range of conditions where an anti-microbial agent is needed. It finds specific use in the treatment of infections in the mouth such as mouth ulcers, gingivitis, phyorrhoea, as well as the catarrhal problems of pharyngitis and sinusitis. It may also help with laryngitis and respiratory complaints. Systemically it is of value in the treatment of boils and similar conditions as well as glandular fever and brucellosis. It is often used as part of an approach to the treatment of the common cold. Externally it will be healing and antiseptic for wounds and abrasions.

Myrrh is a common ingredient in European toothpaste to fight the bacteria that cause tooth decay. Myrrh may help prevent heart disease. Preliminary Indian studies suggest that it reduces cholesterol. The herb may also help prevent the internal blood clots that trigger heart attack.

Description

Indigenous to North-East Africa, collected in Southern Arabia and Iran.

Myrrh is a large shrub or small tree that grows in the Middle East and Ethiopia and Somalia. A pale yellow oil drips from the cuts in its dull gray bark and hardens to form teardrop-shaped nuggets of myrrh, which are powdered for use as a healing herb.

Dosage

Infusion: As the resin only dissolves in water with difficulty, it should be powdered well to make an infusion. Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the powder and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: As the resin dissolves much more easily in alcohol, the tincture is preferable and easily obtainable. Take 1–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: It will combine well with Echinacea for infections and as a mouth wash for ulcers and similar problems. For external use it should be combined with distilled Witch Hazel.

Safety

Ayurvedic science suggests that myrrh can create excess pitta. Do not use if you are pregnant. Large amounts may have violent laxative action and could cause the other symptoms such as seating, nausea, vomiting, and accelerated heartbeat.

Myrrh is included in the FDA's list of safe herbs. If gum bleeding or tooth or gum pain persists longer than two weeks, consult a dentist. If you experience any side reactions after taking this herb, contact your doctor immediately.

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BALCHAR

Name: Muskroot.

Biological Name: Nardostachys jatamansi Valerianaceae.

Other Names: Muskroot; Indian Spikenard, Jatamanshi, Jatamashi, Balchar.

Achte Narde, Balacharea, Balchir, Bhut-jatt, Bhytajata, Duk, Jaramanshi, Jatamamshi, Jatamanchi, Jatamansi, Jatamashi, Jatamasi, Jatamavshi, Jatamavashi, Jatamsi, Jetamanchi, Kuki-lipot, Narde Indike, Nard Indien, Sambul-u-'l hind, Sumbula-theeb, Sunbuluttib, Tapaswini.

Description: This herb is found in India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim. It grows in Himalayas at altitudes from 9,000–17,000 feet.

Parts Used: Rhizome, rhizome oil Medicinal Properties.

Action: Aromatic, antispasmodic, carminative, deobstruent, digestive stimulant, diuretic, emmenagogue, nervine, reproductive, tonic.

Uses

—convulsions
—digestive diseases
—epilepsy
—flatulence
—gastric disorders
—heart palpitations
—jaundice
—kidney stones
—respiratory diseases
—skin conditions
—typhoid
—seminal debility

Jatamansi is used in several Ayurvedic home remedies. Listed below are a few of them.

Jatamansi Cinnamon Home Remedy for flatulence, colicky pains, gastrodynia, and hysterical affections.

Jatamansi-Aloe Home Remedy for epilepsy, hysteria and convulsions.

Jatamansi Tonic: A tonic for general debility and seminal weakness.

Jatamansi Saffron Home Remedy for tubercular adenitis and for scorpion sting.

Susruta's Epilepsy Remedy for epilepsy.

Dosage

Infusion, powder.

Safety

No information about the safety of this herb is available. Use caution. Ayurvedic herbs are often taken in combination to neutralize the toxicity one herb with the opposing effect of other. Do not take except under the supervision of a qualified professional.

BALLOON FLOWER

Latin Name: Platycodon grandiflorum.

Other Names: Chinese Bell-Flower, Japanese Bell-Flower, Jie-Geng.

A Remedy For

Balloon Flower is used in traditional Chinese medicine for respiratory ailments such as cough, bronchitis, sore throat, and tonsillitis. Although it is known for its ability to loosen phlegm, its effectiveness has not yet been proven through formal clinical trials.

What It Is; Why It Works

This herb draws its name from the unopened buds of its lovely blue blossoms, which resemble small balloons. Its natural habitat is northern Asia, where the root is used

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medicinally, usually in combination with other herbs. In the traditional Chinese system, Balloon Flower is used primarily as an expectorant. Laboratory research shows that Balloon Flower contains compounds with a variety of beneficial effects that may prove useful in modern medicine. In lab animals, it has the ability to lower blood sugar levels and digestive secretions, as well as fat and cholesterol levels.

In addition, Balloon Flower has shown immune enhancing and antibacterial activity, and is effective against a particular type of flatworm caused by eating raw or undercooked fish.

Avoid If...

Do not take Balloon Flower if you have tuberculosis or a stomach ulcer.

Special Cautions

At customary dosage levels, Balloon Flower poses no known risks.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Manufacturers of Chinese herbal products usually make a powder of Balloon Flower's dried root, then combine it with other herbs in tablet and capsule form. A liquid extract is also available.

Typical Dosage

A usual dosage is 3 to 9 grams a day, taken in several small doses. Dosage guidelines vary widely, so be sure to follow the package directions and read the label carefully for other ingredients.

Balloon Flower Root

Name: Platycodon.

Biological Name: Platycodi grandiflori Campanulaceae.

Other Names: Platycodon, jie geng, Balloon Flower Root.

Parts Used: Root.

Remedies For

Anti-inflammatory, expectorant, demulcent

This herb can be used for both hot and cold phlegm. It assists the lung qi to expectorate phlegm and stop cough. It is also used for pulmonary abscesses, throat inflammations, and loss of voice. It eliminates pus, reducing inflammation and promoting healing.

Chinese herbalists consider this as one of the herbs with a rising qi, meaning that it is used in formulas to direct the activity of other herbs to the upper part of the body. It can be used to quell cough, clear phlegm, and treat the common cold, influenza, bronchitis, and pulmonary tuberculosis.

Dosage

3–9 grams.

Safety

Because of its ascending energy, platycodon is generally contraindicated for hemoptysis (blood in the sputum).

Balm

Name: Balm.

Biological Name: Melissa officinalis Mint Family, Labiatae.

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Other Names: Balm, Lemon Balm, Melissa, Sweet Balm, Balm mint, bee balm, blue balm, cure-all, dropsy plant, garden balm, sweet balm.

Parts Used: Herb, leaves, volatile oil and polyphenols.

History

Melissa had been used for centuries. References are found in Roman writings. The Arabs relied on it to treat depression and anxiety, while the English included it in the furniture polish. There are references to balm as an aid to longevity. John Evelyn, the seventeenth century diarist said about the balm, "Balm is a sovereign for the brain, strengthening the memory and powerfully chasing away melancholy."

Remedies For

Antispasmodic, calmative, carminative, diaphoretic, emmenagogue, stomachic.

Lemon balm is used in herbal teas, both for its flavor and its mild sedative properties. The tea is recommended to induce perspiration and relieve fever due to cold and flu, and to ease menstrual cramps, insomnia, headaches and nervousness. The crushed leaves help heal wounds and insect bites. It is a key ingredient in certain perfumes and cosmetics.

It is antispasmodic, calmative, carminative, diaphoretic, emmenagogue, and stomachic. It is useful for all sorts of nervous problems. The balm also relieves cramps, dyspepsia, flatulence, colic, chronic bronchial catarrh, and some forms of asthma.

It had been tried for migraine and toothache, and, during pregnancy, for headaches and dizziness. An infusion of the leaves added to bath water is said to promote the onset of menstruation.

Description

Balm is a perennial plant. It grows wild in fields and gardens and along road sides. It has an upright stem that grows as high as 3 feet. Light green toothed ovate leaves grow in opposite pairs at each joint.

The flowers may range in color from pale yellow to rose colored or blue white. The flowers appear in July–September. When bruised, the whole plant smells like lemon.

Dosage

Use 2 tbsp chopped herb or leaves to 1 cup boiling water. Drink warn as required. For a cold extract use 2 tbsp per cup of cold water, let stand 8 hours. If you are using powder, take 10 to 40 grains at a time.

Safety

US: Generally recognized as safe

UK: General sales list

Canada: Approved as an over-the-counter drug

France: Traditional Medicine

Germany: Commission E approved as an over the counter drug.

Balm Mint

Name: Peppermint.

Biological Name: Mentha piperita Labiatae.

Other Names: Peppermint, brady mint, balm mint, curled mint, lamb mint.

Parts Used: Aerial parts, oil.

Active Compounds

Essential oil, up to 1.5%, containing menthol,

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menthone and menthyl acetate as the major components, with isomenthone, menthofuran, isomenthol, neomenthol, piperitone, a- & b-pinene, limonene, cineole, pulegone, viridiflorol, ledol etc.

Flavonoids; menthoside, rutin and others.

Miscellaneous; rosmarinic acid, azulenes, choline, carotenes etc.

Remedies For

Carminative, anti-inflammatory, anti-spasmodic, aromatic, diaphoretic, anti-emetic, nervine, anti-microbial, analgesic, stimulant, stomachic, rubefacient. Peppermint is an excellent carminative, having a relaxing effect on the muscles of the digestive system, combats flatulence and stimulates bile and digestive juice flow. It is used to relieve intestinal colic, flatulent dyspepsia and associated conditions. The volatile oil acts as a mild anesthetic to the stomach wall, which allays feelings of nausea and the desire to vomit. Relieves the nausea & vomiting of pregnancy and travel sickness.

Also used in the treatment of ulcerative conditions of the bowels. It is a traditional treatment of fevers, colds and influenza. As an inhalant it is used as temporary relief for nasal catarrh. Where headaches are associated with digestion, Peppermint may help.

As a nervine it eases anxiety and tension. In painful periods, it relieves the pain and eases associated tension. Externally it is used to relieve itching and inflammations.

Combinations: For colds and influenza it may be used with Boneset, Elder Flowers and Yarrow.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto a heaped teaspoonful of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10 minutes. This may be drunk as often as desired.

Tincture: 1–2 ml three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Balm of Gilead

Name: Balm of Gilead.

Biological Name: Populus candicans Salicadeae.

Other Names: Poplar buds, Balsam Poplar, Balm of Gilead, Mecca balsam.

Parts Used: Closed buds.

Active Compounds

Phenolic glycosides; salicin, populin (benzoyl salicin) and chrysin.

Volatile oil, the major constituent of which is a—caryophyllene, with cineole, arcurcumene, bisabolene, farnesene, acetophenone and others.

Miscellaneous; alkanes, resins, phenolic acids, gallic acid tannins and other ubiquitous substances.

Remedies For

Stimulating expectorant, anti-microbial, vulnerary.

Used For

As it soothes, disinfects, and astringes the mucous membranes, Balm of Gilead is an

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excellent remedy for sore throats, coughs and laryngitis. It is used for treating laryngitis that is accompanied by loss of voice. It may be used in chronic bronchitis. Externally it can be used to ease inflammations due to rheumatism and arthritis, as well as for dry and scaly skin conditions such as psoriasis and dry eczema.

The herb is considered to be a stimulant, tonic, diuretic, and anti-scorbutic. A tincture has been beneficially employed in affections of the chest, stomach, and kidneys and in rheumatism and scurvy. With oil they form a useful external application in bruises, swellings, wounds, some cutaneous diseases, rheumatic pains.

Description

Cultivated in Europe & N. America.

Balm of Gilead is a large, deciduous tree found on stream banks and planted along roadsides in Eastern US and most of Canada. May grow as tall as 100 feet. The leaves are dark green on top and whitish underneath, sometimes hairy on the lower veins.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour one cup of boiling water onto 1 teaspoonful of the buds and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day or more often until effective.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day. Use as a syrup to make it more palatable.

Combinations

Coltsfoot, Red Sage and White Horehound combine well with Balm of Gilead to enhance its actions on the respiratory system. Chickweed or Calendula will aid its work topically, reducing any irritation that may occur.

BALMONY

Name: *Balmony.*

Biological Name: Chelone glabra Scrophulariaceae.

Other Names: Bitter Herb, Snake Head, Turtle Head, Turtle Broom, Turtlebloom, saltrheum weed, shell flower, snakehead, Balmony.

Parts Used: Leaves.

Active Compounds

Very little work has been done on this plant. Resins and bitters only have been reported.

Remedies For

Actions: Cholagogue, hepatic, anti-emetic, stimulant, laxative, antheimintic, aperient, cholagogue, tonic.

It Is beneficial for a weak stomach and indigestion, general debility, constipation, and torpid liver, it also stimulates the appetite, and in small doses is a good tonic during convalescence. In addition, balmony is an effective antheimintic. Externally, it is used for sores and eczema. The ointment is valuable to relieve the itching and irritation of piles.

Indications: Balmony is an excellent agent for liver problems. It acts as a tonic on the whole digestive and absorptive system. It has a stimulating effect on the secretion of digestive juices, and in this most natural way its laxative properties are produced. Balmony is used in gall stones, inflammation of the gall-bladder and in jaundice. It stimulates the appetite, eases colic, dyspepsia and biliousness and is helpful in debility. Externally it has been

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used on inflamed breasts, painful ulcers and piles. It is considered a specific in gall stones that lead to congestive jaundice.

Herbalists consider this herb a useful remedy for gastro-intestinal debility with hepatic torpor or jaundice. Dyspeptic conditions attending convalescence from prostrating fevers are often aided by it, and should be studied particularly for vague and shifting pain in the region of the ascending colon.

Kings Dispensatory describes it as being tonic, cathartic, and anthelmintic. Especially valuable in jaundice and hepatic diseases, likewise for the removal of worms, for which it may be used in powder or decoction, internally and also in injection. Used as a tonic in small doses, in dyspepsia, debility of the digestive organs, particularly when associated with hepatic inactivity, and during convalescence from febrile and inflammatory diseases. It is valuable after malarial fevers as a tonic and to unlock the secretions when checked by quinine. Recommended in form of ointment as an application to painful and inflamed tumors, irritable and painful ulcers, inflammed breasts, piles, etc. Kings gives the following specific indications: Gastro-intestinal debility, with hepatic torpor or jaundice; worms.

Description

Balmony is an herbaceous perennial plant found in wet ground from Newfoundland to Florida and westward to Minnesota, Kansas, and Texas, Its simple, erect, square stem reaches a height of 1 to 3 feet. Opposite and short-petioled, its shining, dark green, pointed leaves are ser-rate and oblong-lancealate in shape. Blooming from July to September, the white flowers, often tinged with pink or magenta, grow in dense terminal or axillary spikes. The two-lipped corolla of the flower somewhat resembles a turtle's head. The fruit is an ovoid capsule.

Dosage

Infusion: Use I tsp. leaves to I cup water. Take 1 to 2 cups a day.

Tincture: Take 10 to 20 drops in water, three or four times a day.

Combinations: For the relief on constipation, Balmony may be combined with Butternut. For jaundice it will best be used with Milk Thistle and other toning hepatics such as Golden Seal.

Balsam

Latin Name: Picea excelsa.

Other Names: Fir, Spruce, Norway Pine.

A Remedy For

—Bronchitis
—Colds
—Cough
—Fever
—Nerve pain
—Rheumatism
—Sore throat
—Tendency to infection

What It Is; Why It Works

Picea comes from the Latin "pix" meaning "pitch." Balsam trees are found in northern and central Europe. Their medicinal property resides in the oil extracted from the needles, branch tips, or branches, and the fresh fir shoots. All pines yield a certain amount of resin, obtained by tapping the trees. This is distilled to make oil of turpentine and rosin. The latter is used for treating violin

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bows and making sealing wax, varnish, oil paints, and resinous soaps. It was formerly used as "brewer's pitch" to seal the insides of beer casks. Both oil of turpentine and impure turpentine (known as tar) are used medicinally. Balsam is also used in the U.S. as an aroma for beer. Used medicinally, Balsam exerts a decongestant and antibacterial action. Applied to skin, it improves local circulation.

Avoid If...

Avoid Balsam in any form if you have bronchial asthma or whooping cough. Do not use it as a bath additive if you have a large skin injury or an acute skin disease, heart problems, unusually stiff muscles, or an infectious disease.

Special Cautions

Use of Balsam can aggravate bronchial spasms.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How To Prepare

Balsam is available in oil, gel, emulsion, solution, and ointment forms.

Typical Dosage

Oral Administration: 4 drops of Balsam oil on a lump of sugar or in a little water 3 times daily, not to exceed 5 to 6 grams (about 1 teaspoonful) daily

Inhalation: 2 grams (about one-half teaspoonful) of Balsam oil added to hot water several times daily

Skin Application: Rub several drops of oil, lotion, or ointment into the affected area Bath additive: Boil about 1 cup of oil with 1 quart of water; let stand for 5 minutes, then add to a full bath. Be sure to relax afterwards. Store Balsam in a closed container.

Balsam Fir

Name: Balsam Fir.

Biological Name: Abies balsamea, Pine Family, Pinaceae.

Other Names: Balsam Fir, Balsam of Gilead Fir, Fir Balsam, Fir Pine, Sapin, Silver Fir, Silver Pine.

Parts Used: All parts are used.

History

Balsam fir was used by American Indians for medicinal purposes. Almost every part of the tree had some medicinal use. The aromatic resin served them as a salve for cuts, sores, and burns. They had taken it internally for colds, coughs, and asthma. The inner bark, brewed into a tea, served as a remedy for chest pains. The twigs acted as a laxative, when steeped in water. Bits of the roots were held in the mouth for mouth sores. The needles were used for sweat baths. The inhaled vapor was believed to clear up congestion of cold and coughs.

Remedies For

The resin from the balsam fir is used as a source of turpentine and as an adhesive for microscope slides and optical lenses.

Description

Balsam fir is an evergreen tree growing 40–80 feet tall. It has dark, shiny green, flattened needles. The needles look as if it was arranged

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in two rows. It flowers around May-June. There are separate male and female flowers. When young, the bark is smooth and greyish and is covered with resin blisters. As the tree matures, these resin blisters crack into sacly plates.

Balsam of Peru

Latin Name: Myroxylon balsamum.

Other Names: Balsam of Tolu, Balsam Tree.

A Remedy For

—Bronchitis
—Colds
—Cough
—Fever
—Hemorrhoids
—Sore throat
—Tendency to infection
—Wounds and burns

Balsam of Peru is used externally for infected and poorly healing wounds, burns, bedsores, frostbite, leg ulcers, bruises caused by artificial limbs, and hemorrhoids.

What It Is; Why It Works

Balsam of Peru is a resin extracted from incisions in the bark of the Peruvian Balsam tree. It is an antiseptic that combats bacteria, promotes wound healing, and kills parasites, especially scabies. When taken internally, it has an expectorant action, helping to loosen phlegm.

The tree is native to South and Central America. Despite its name, the drug's main source is San Salvador.

Avoid If...

There are no known medical conditions that preclude use of this medication.

Special Cautions

Whether taken internally or externally, large quantities of this medication can damage the kidneys.

Used externally, Balsam of Peru often causes skin reactions such as eruptions, ulcers, swelling, and red patches. Allergic reactions are also possible from internal use.

Because Balsam of Peru may increase your sensitivity to sunlight, minimize your exposure to the sun while using this medication.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Preparations are available for both external and internal use.

Typical Dosage

External preparations contain up to 20% Balsam of Peru. If the drug is to be applied over an extensive surface, use a product containing no more than 10% Balsam of Peru. Do not apply for more than 1 week. For internal use, the typical dosage is 500 milligrams daily. Since potency of commercial preparation may vary, follow the manufacturer's instructions whenever available.

Balsam Pear

Name: Bitter Melon.

Biological Name: Momordica charantia.

Other Names: Balsam pear, Bitter Melon.

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Parts Used: Fruit.

Active Compounds

At least three different groups of constituents in bitter melon have been reported to have hypoglycemic (blood sugar lowering) or other actions of potential benefit in diabetes mellitus. These include a mixture of steroidal saponins known as charantin, insulin-like peptides, and alkaloids. It is still unclear which of these is most effective or if all three work together. Two proteins, known as alpha- and beta-momorcharin, inhibit the AIDS virus, but this research has only been demonstrated in test tubes and not in humans. An as yet unidentified constituent in bitter melon inhibits the enzyme guanylate cyclase, that may benefit people with psoriasis.

History

A relatively common food item, bitter melon was traditionally used for a dazzling array of conditions by people in tropical regions. Numerous infections, cancer, leukemia, and diabetes are among the most common conditions it was believed to improve. The leaves and fruit have both been used occasionally to make teas and beer or to season soups in the Western world.

Remedies For

Bitter melon is reported to help in the treatment of:

—Diabetes

—HIV support

—Psoriasis

The blood lowering action of the fresh juice of the unripe bitter melon has been confirmed in scientific studies in animals and humans. Charantin is more powerful than the drug tolbutamide, which is sometimes used in the treatment of diabetes to lower the blood sugar levels.

The ripe fruit of bitter melon has been shown to exhibit some remarkable anticancer effects, especially leukemia.

Description

Bitter melon grows in tropical areas, including parts of East Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and South America, where it is used as a food as well as a medicine. It is a green cucumber shaped fruit with gourd-like bumps all over it. It looks like an ugly, light green cucumber.

The fruit should be firm, like a cucumber. It tastes very bitter. Although the seeds, leaves, and vines of bitter melon have all been used, the fruit is the safest and most prevalent part of the plant used medicinally.

Dosage

For those with a taste or tolerance for bitter flavor, a small melon can be eaten as food or up to 50 ml of fresh juice can be drunk per day. An option for those who do not care for the bitter taste are bitter melon tinctures, of which 5 ml is generally taken two to three times per day.

Safety

Excessively high doses of bitter melon juice can cause abdominal pain and diarrhea. Small children or anyone with hypoglycemia should not take bitter melon because this herb could theoretically trigger or worsen low blood sugar (hypoglycemia).

Furthermore, diabetics taking hypoglycemic drugs (such as chlorpropamide, glyburide, or phenformin) or insulin should use bitter

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melon only under medical supervision, as it may potentiate the effectiveness of the drugs and lead to severe hypoglycemia.

Balsam Weed

Name: Celandine.

Biological Name: Chelidonium majus.

Other Names: Celandine, Chelidonium, garden celandine, great celandine, tetterwort, jewel weed, quick-in-hand, slippers, snap weed, pale touch-me-not, slipper weed, balsam weed, weathercock, touch-me-not.

Parts Used: Rootstock, herb.

Remedies For

Anodyne, antispasmodic, caustic, diaphoretic, diuretic, hydragogue, narcotic, purgative.

Taken internally, celandine has a special effect on the digestive system (stomach, gallbladder, liver), and its antispasmodic properties make it useful for asthmatic symptoms. As a hydragogue it is used for dropsical conditions. Externally, made into an ointment or a poultice, celandine can be used for skin diseases like herpes, eczema, and ringworm. The juice has some antiseptic properties and has long been used to remove warts. Mix with vinegar when using the juice on the skin.

Description

Celandine is a biennial or perennial plant widespread in damp, rich soil in the north-eastern U.S. and along fences, roads, hedges, as well as in waste places, in Europe. The finger-thick, cylindrical rootstock is red-brown on the outside, orange-yellow inside, and contains a milky juice. The hollow stem is round, smooth, and swollen at the joints. The leaves are alternate, pinnate or pinnatifid, with ovate, mildly and irregularly lobed leaflets. The bright yellow flowers have four pews, are 1/2 to 3/4 inch across, and grow from April to September. The entire plant contains a bitter, orange-yellow juice that turns red when exposed to air.

Dosage

Gather the rootstock in spring, before plant flowers. Use with extreme caution, use only with medical direction. The dried plant is less active than the fresh.

Infusion: Use I level tsp. rootstock or herb with 1 cup boiling water; steep for 30 minutes. Drink cold, 1/2 cup a day.

Tincture: A dose is 10 to 15 drops.

Juice: For warts, dab no more than 2 or 3 warts at a time with fresh juice, two or three times a day.

Safety

CAUTION: THE JUICE CAN PRODUCE POISONING BY CONGESTING THE LUNGS AND LIVER AND BY NARCOTIC ACTION ON THE NERVOUS SYSTEM. SKIN POISONING HAS ALSO RESULTED FROM HANDLING THE CRUSHED PLANT.

Bamboo Leaf

Name: Bamboo Leaf.

Biological Name: Lophatheri gracilis Gramineae.

Other Names: Bamboo Leaf, Dan zhu ye, Lophatherum.

Parts Used: Leaves.

Remedies For

Anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, diuretic.

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This herb is used for heat conditions associated with irritability and anxiety. Also for swollen, painful gums and urinary tract infections with signs of irritability; because of its effect on the heart, which in Chinese theory corresponds to the mind.

Dosage

6–12 grams.

Safety

Bamboo leaf should not be used by pregnant women.

Bamboo Manna

Name: Bamboo Manna.

Biological Name: Bumbusa arundinacia, Bumbusa apous, Bumbusa orientalls, Bumbusa spinosa.

Other Names: Bamboo Manna, Vamsha Lochana, Vamsh Lochan, Bans.

Description:This plant is found at high altitudes in India.

Parts Used: Milky bark; leaves, young shoots, seeds, roots, inner stalks or stems of female plant.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action: antispasmodic, demulcent, expectorant, hemostatic, rejuvenative, tonic.

Leaves—anthelmintic, aphrodisiac, emmenagogue, febrifuge, stimulant, tonic.

Uses

—anxiety

—asthma

—bleeding

—colds

—consumption

—coughs

—debility

—dehydration

—emaciation

—fevers

—palpitation

—skin disorders

—ulcers

—vomiting

This herb nurtures heart, liver, and soothes the nervous system. It also relieves thirst, anxiety, improves the blood, thread-worms in children, coma, strengthening after chronic diseases, and for tissue deficiency.

Dosage

Decoction, milk decoction, powder.

Safety

Caution: Increases congestion if not balanced with pungent herbs like ginger.

No information about the safety of this herb is available.

USE CAUTION: AYURVEDIC HERBS ARE OFTEN TAKEN IN COMBINATION WITH OTHERS TO NEUTRALIZE THE TOXICITY ONE HERB WITH THE OPPOSING EFFECT OF OTHER. DO NOT TAKE EXCEPT UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL.

Bamboo Shavings

Name: Bamboo shavings.

Biological Name: Caulis bambusae in taeniis Gramineae.

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Other Names: Bamboo shavings, zhu ru.

Parts Used: shavings of the stem.

Remedies For

Antipyretic, antiemetic, expectorant, hemostatic.

This herb is used for thick, yellow, hard-to-expectorate phlegm when there is respiratory infection, and for vomiting caused by heat in the stomach, for which it can be combined with pinellia and coptis. It can also be used for morning sickness and a restless fetus when combined with scutellaria and pinellia.

Chinese herbalists also use this herb to cool blood heat for various symptoms of bleeding, such as hemoptysis (spitting up of blood and phlegm), hematemesis (vomiting blood), epistaxis (bloody nose), and metrorrhagia (menstrual flooding).

Dosage

4.5–9 grams.

Safety

Bamboo shavings should not be used in cases of spleen deficiency or cough caused by cold.

Bamia

Name: Okra.

Biological Name: Abelmoschus esculentus, Hibiscus esculentus.

Other Names: Okra, Okro, Ochro, Okoro, Quimgombo (Cuba), Quingumbo, Ladies Fingers, Gombo, Kopi Arab, Kacang Bendi, Bhindi (S. Asia), Bendi (Malaysia), Bamia, Bamya or Bamieh (middle east), Gumbo (Southern USA), Quiabo, Quiabos (Portugal and Angola), okura (Japan), qiu kui (Taiwan).

History

Okra traces its origin from what was known as Abyssinia (Ethiopia) spreading right through to Eastern Mediterranea, India, Africa, North America, South America and the Caribbean. Though long popular in the South, it is becoming increasingly common and well known in Western Countries.

Description

Okra is a tall-growing (3 to 6 feet or more in height), warm-season, annual vegetable from the same family as hollyhock, rose of Sharon and hibiscus. The immature pods are used for soups, canning and stews or as a fried or boiled vegetable. The hibiscus like flowers and upright plant is very pretty.

When cut, okra releases a sticky substance with thickening properties, useful for soups and stews.

Parts Used: Immature pods.

Constituents: Nutrition Information.

For 1/2 cup sliced, cooked okra

—Calories 25

—Dietary Fiber 2 grams

—Protein 1.52 grams

—Carbohydrates 5.76 grams

—Vitamin A 460 IU

—Vitamin C 13.04 mg

—Folic acid 36.5 micrograms

—Calcium 50.4 mg

—Iron 0.4 mg

—Potassium 256.6 mg

—Magnesium 46 mg

For 1 cup raw okra

—Calories: 33

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—Fiber: 3.2 g

—Total Fat: 0.1 g

—Protein: 2.0 g

—Carbohydrate: 7.6 g

—Vitamin A 660 IU

—Vitamin C 21 mg

—Folate 87.8 mg

—Magnesium 57 mg

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

According to Sylvia W. Zook, Ph.D. (nutritionist) Okra has several benefits.

1. The superior fiber found in okra helps to stabilize blood sugar by curbing the rate at which sugar is absorbed from the intestinal tract.
2. Okra's mucilage binds cholesterol and bile acid carrying toxins dumped into it by the filtering liver.
3. Okra helps lubricate the large intestines due to its bulk laxative qualities. The okra fiber absorbs water and ensures bulk in stools. This helps prevent and improve constipation. Unlike harsh wheat bran, which can irritate or injure the intestinal tract, okra's mucilage soothes, and okra facilitates elimination more comfortably by its slippery characteristic. Okra binds excess cholesterol and toxins (in bile acids). These, if not evacuated, will cause numerous health problems. Okra also assures easy passage out of waste from the body. Okra is completely non-toxic, non-habit forming, has no adverse side effects, is full of nutrients, and is economically within reach of most unlike the OTC drugs.
4. Okra fiber is excellent for feeding the good bacteria (probiotics). This contributes to the health of the intestinal tract.
5. Okra is a supreme vegetable for those feeling weak, exhausted, and suffering from depression.
6. Okra is used for healing ulcers and to keep joints limber. It helps to neutralize acids, being very alkaline, and provides a temporary protective coating for the digestive tract.
7. Okra treats lung inflammation, sore throat, and irritable bowel.
8. In India, okra has been used successfully in experimental blood plasma replacements.

To retain most of okra's nutrients and self-digesting enzymes, it should be cooked as little as possible, *e.g.*, with low heat or lightly steamed. Some eat it raw.

Specific Ailments

Acid Reflux and Constipation: A person, suffering from constipation for the past 20 years and recently from acid reflux, started eating 6 pieces of Okra. Since then, has not taken any other medication. Now, his blood sugar has dropped from 135 to 98 and his cholesterol and acid reflux are also under control.

Asthma: Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory. This anti-inflammatory activity may curtail the development of asthma symptoms. A large preliminary study has shown that young children with asthma experience significantly less wheezing if they eat a diet high in fruits rich in vitamin C. 1/2 cup of cooked Okra contains over 13 mg of vitamin C.

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Atherosclerosis: Diets high in insoluble fiber, such as those containing okra, are associated with protection against heart disease in both men and women.

Cancer: The insoluble fiber found in Okra helps to keep the intestinal tract healthy, decreasing the risk of some forms of cancer, especially colo-rectal cancer.

Capillary Fragility: Eating plenty of flavonoid and vitamin C-rich fruits and vegetables such as okra helps to support the structure of capillaries.

Cataracts: 1/2 cup of cooked okra contains 460 IU of vitamin A. Some studies have reported that eating more foods rich in beta-carotene or vitamin A was associated with a lower risk of cataracts.

Cholesterol: A study (JAMA July 23, 2003) showed that consuming a "dietary portfolio" of vegetarian foods lowered cholesterol nearly as well as the prescription drug lovastatin (Mevacor). The diet was rich in soluble fiber from oats, barley, psyllium, eggplant and okra. It used soy substitutes instead of meat and milk and included almonds and cholesterol-lowering margarine (such as Take Control) every day.

Depression and Lack of Energy: Okra is a supreme vegetable for those feeling weak, exhausted, and suffering from depression.

High Homocysteine: A controlled trial showed that eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables containing folic acid, beta-carotene, and vitamin C effectively lowered homocysteine levels. Healthy people were assigned to either a diet containing a pound of fruits and vegetables per day, or to a diet containing 3 1/2 ounces (99 g) of fruits and vegetables per day. After four weeks, those eating the higher amount of fruits and vegetables had an 11 percent lower homocysteine level compared to those eating the lower amount of fruits and vegetables. Okra is a storehouse of vitamins and folic acid.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS): In one survey, researchers gathered information from nearly 400 people (half with MS) over three years. They found that consumption of vegetable protein, fruit juice, and foods rich in vitamin C, thiamine, riboflavin, calcium, and potassium correlated with a decreased MS risk.

Safety

No safety related issues are known for this widely used vegetable.

Ban Lan Gen

Name: Isatis.

Biological Name: Isatidis tinctoria, Cruciferae.

Other Names: Isatis leaf, Isatis, Da Qing Ye, Ban Lan Gen, indigo.

Parts Used: Leaf, root.

Remedies For

Leaf: Antibacterial, antiviral, antipyretic.

Root: Antibacterial, antiviral, parasiticide.

Isatis leaf is useful for febrile diseases and diseases associated with epidemics. Often, both the leaf and the root are used together for a variety of contagious diseases, including mumps. Despite the strength of this herb, it can be used by all, regardless of their constitution, for febrile epidemic diseases. Considering the fact that conventional Western medicine has little to offer for

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contagious viral diseases, this is one of a few herbs that deserve wider appreciation for their antiviral properties. It is especially effective when there is infection in the lungs and for skin conditions involving rashes or blotches.

Isatis Root is one of the most effective antivirals. It is therefore useful for a wide range of infectious viral and bacterial conditions, including the common cold, influenza, sore throat, and epidemic diseases, such as mumps. It cools the blood and is effective for damp-heat conditions, such as jaundice.

Description: A Chinese and Ayurvedic herb, this is now cultivated in the west.

Dosage

10–30 grams (root).

9–15 grams (leaf).

Safety

CAUTION: ISATIS LEAF SHOULD NOT BE USED LONG TERM BY THOSE WITH WEAK AND COLD SPLEEN OR STOMACH. ISATIS ROOT SHOULD NOT BE USED BY THOSE WHO ARE WEAK OR ARE WITHOUT TRUE FIRE TOXICITY.

Ban Xia

Name: Pinellia.

Biological Name: Pinelliae ternatae Araceae.

Other Names: Pinellia, ban xia.

Parts Used: Rhizome.

Remedies For

Antitussive, expectorant, antiemetic, antitoxin, anodyne. Draws out cold and damp, directs qi downward. It is the most important herb for cold phlegm and dampness, especially when the root of the problem is a cold, damp spleen. It is also useful for cough, phlegm, nausea, and vomiting; for this, it is commonly combined with citrus peel and ginger. Chinese herbalists also use this herb for swollen glands, nodules, and goiter caused by stagnation of cold phlegm.

Dosage

5–12 grams.

Safety

Pinellia should not be used by pregnant women or those with any blood disorders, especially bleeding. It should be used with caution by those with heat conditions. Ancient texts describe pinellia as incompatible with aconite.

Banaphsa

Name: Wild Violet.

Biological Name: Viola odorata Violaceae.

Other Names: Wild Violet, Trayman, Vanpsa, Banaphsa, Sweet Violet, Violet, common blue violet, Banasa, Banafshah, Nilapuspa.

Description

A herb found in high altitudes in Himalayas. It is a long trailing plant of less than 6 in high. The plant has thick and scaly underground stem, with rooting runners.

Parts Used: Flowers, root.

Active Compounds

Phenolic glycosides, gaultherin, violutoside (=salicylic acid methyl ester)

—Saponins; myrosin and violin

—Flavonoids; rutin and violarutin

—Miscellaneous; odoratine, an alkaloid, 2-nitroproprionic acid, mucilage.

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MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action: alterative, anti-inflammatory, diuretic, emetic, expectorant.

Flowers: aperient, astringent, demulcent, diaphoretic, diuretic, emollient, laxative.

Root: emetic (in larger doses)

Uses

—bronchitis

—cancer

—catarrh

—chest tightness

—cough

—eczema

—fever

—flu

—kidney and liver diseases

—lung disorders

—rectum and uterus prolapse

—rheumatism

—sneezing

—urinary infections

Sweet Violet has a long history of use as a cough remedy and for the treatment of bronchitis. It may also be used to aid in the treatment of upper respiratory catarrh. It is also used for treating skin conditions such as eczema and rheumatism. Also used for urinary infections. Sweet Violet has a reputation as an anti-cancer herb.

This herb is reported to be a very effective folk remedy for the treatment of types of cancers. The aboriginal tribes of India are reported to have been using the plant for the complete cure of cancer among their people for a long time. Infusion of the leaves is said to relieve the pain of cancerous growths, especially in the throat. Either the water extract of the leaves or the leaf juice is effective in the cure of tongue-cancer. All the plant parts contain the alkaloid "Violine." The stem is a very good substitute for Ipecacuanha.

When mixed with almond oil and senna syrup, this herb is an excellent demulcent and aperient for children.

The flowers of this herb are used in bilious affections, epilepsy, nervous disorders, prolapse of the rectum and the uterus, and inflammatory swellings. The flowers are popularly used for the treatment of coughs, sore throats, kidney diseases, liver disorders and infantile afflictions. The flowers are either used as an infusion in water or as a syrup.

Dosage

Decoction: Infusion, powder, pill, syrup.

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1 teaspoonful of the herb and let infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information about the safety of this herb is available.

USE CAUTION: AYURVEDIC HERBS ARE OFTEN TAKEN IN COMBINATION WITH OTHERS TO NEUTRALIZE THE TOXICITY ONE HERB WITH THE OPPOSING EFFECT OF OTHER. DO NOT TAKE EXCEPT UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL.

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BANGLA REVANCHINI

Name: Rhubarb.

Biological Name: Rheum emodi, Rheum officinale, Rheum acuminatum, Rheum speciforme, Rheum webbianum, Rheum moorcroftianum, Rheum australe, Rheum palmatum Polygonaceae family.

Other Names: Rhubarb, amla-vetasa, aml parni, revand-chini, archu, Chinese Rhubarb, Turkey rhubarb, Da huang, Bangla Revanchini, Himalayan rhubarb, Indian rhubarb, Ladakirevanda-chini, Nattu ireval-chinni, Reval-chini, Rhabarber, Rheuchini, Rhubarb de Perse, Tursak, Variyattu.

Parts Used: The drug consists of the dried rhizome or underground stem of the plant, either whole or cut into pieces of suitable length. The roots or rhizomes are dug up, cut transversely into short pieces (rounds and flats), threaded on a string, and dried in the sun or by artificial heat.

Note: Rhizome of Rheum palmatum and other species are used, not the garden rhubarb.

Active Compound

Anthraquinone derivatives such as chrysophanic acid (=chrysophanol), emodin, aloe-emodin, rhein & physcion, with their O-glycosides such as glucorhein, chrysophanein, glucoemodin; sennosides A-E, reidin C & others.

Tannins: in Chinese Rhubarb: d-catechin and epicatechin gallate, with various cinnamoyl and coumaroyl golloyl glucosides and fructoses.

Stilbene Derivatives: Related stilbene glycosides present in other types.

Miscellaneous: Volatile oil, containing diisobutyl phthalate, cinnamic and ferulic. acids; rutin, fatty acids, calcium oxalate etc.

Remedies For

Purgative, alterative, hemostatic, antipyretic, anthelmintic, stomachic, bitter tonic, cathartic, laxative, atonic indigestion. Constipation (with fevers, ulcers, infections), diarrhea, Pitta dysentery, jaundice, liver disorders.

Rhubarb Root has a purgative action for use in the treatment of constipation, but also has an astringent effect following this. It therefore has a truly cleansing action upon the gut, removing debris and then astringing with antiseptic properties as well.

Note: Rhubarb Root may color the urine yellow or red.

—Small doses—tonic hepatic.

—Large doses—cathartic.

Ayurvedic Applications

Rhubarb is stomachic, bitter, tonic, cathartic. Useful for simple diarrhea, but not in constipation or any affection in which a continuous aperient action is necessary; Its stimulating combined with its aperient properties render it valuable in atonic dyspepsia.

Best used for the ailments of children and aged persons. Combined with ginger, it may be given in the form of pill in cases where the bowels are sluggish. Ordinary dose of the powder is from 5 to 20 grains.

Some persons chew the root. Rhubarb is an important ingredient of a large variety of herbal compounds. Mixed with Grey Powder it is an excellent remedy for irritation of the bowels, common among children when

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teething and in chronic dysentery, duodenal catarrh or catarrh of the biliary ducts with jaundice and in certain skin diseases. As a mild purgative, rhubarb protects colon tone, used with licorice and psyllium in older and dryer persons (ginger or fennel is added to remove griping action-4 parts rhubarb: 1 part ginger or fennel); purges bile, ama, stagnant food and blood; reduces weight and fat. It is stronger when used with epsom salt.

Traditional Chinese Herbalism Applications

Purgative, antibacterial, antitumor, antifungal, diuretic, hemostatic, cholagogue, antihypertensive, lowers serum cholesterol, anti-inflammatory.

Rhubarb is one of the more powerful herbs used in Chinese medicine. It is excellent for draining damp heat, especially when there is accompanying constipation. It moves the blood and is good for blood stagnation associated with acute stabbing pain and bruises, for which it can be taken both internally as well as externally in a liniment.

Useful for dysenteric conditions caused by damp heat with symptoms of bleeding in the stool. It can also be taken for vomiting of blood. It can be used both internally and topically for infections. It kills blood flukes. As an external remedy for inflammatory skin conditions such as boils and bums, rhubarb powder can be used alone or combined with other herbs with a little flour and water or honey to hold it together. Combinations: It should be combined with carminative herbs to relieve any griping that may occur.

Description

This is found native in India. It grows in Himalayas (above 8,000 to 13,000 feet.) It is also found in China, Bhutan, Tibet, Russia, Turkey and India.

Dosage

Infusion, powder (1 gm.-laxative; 3 gms.-purgative), pill.

Decoction: Put 1/2–1 teaspoonful of the root in a cup of water, bring to the boil and simmer gently for 10 minutes. This should be drunk morning and evening.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

CAUTION: DO NOT USE THIS HERB IS YOU ARE PREGNANT.

DO NOT EAT THE LEAVES—THEY ARE POISONOUS.

Do not take this herb if you are suffering from chronic diarrhea, chills, Vayu hemorrhoids; gout, rheumatism, epilepsy, or uric acid-diseases.

The herb causes the urine to turn yellow, but there is no cause for concern. Do not take this herb if you have a tendency to gout, rheumatism, epilepsy or any uric acid disease, owing to the oxalic acid it contains.

This herb should be used only under the direction of a qualified professional.

BARBERRY

Name: Barberry.

Biological Name: Berberis vulgaris Berberidaceae.

Other Names: European barberry, jaundice berry, pepperidge, pepperidge bush, sowberry, Barberry, berberis, Daruharidra, Daruhaldi, Kingor, Barberry.

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Parts Used: Bark of root or stem. Gather the root in.spring or fall. Use only ripe berries.

Active Compounds

Alkaloids of the isoquinoline type, mainly berberine, berbamine and derivatives, berberrubine, bervulcine, columbamine, isotetrandrine, jatrorrhizine, magnoflorine, oxycanthine and vulvracine.

Miscellaneous: Including chelidonic acid, resin, tannin etc.

History

Barberry has played a prominent role in herbal healing for more than 2,500 years. The ancient Egyptians used it to prevent plagues. India's Ayurveda healers used it for dysentery.

During the early middle ages, European herbalists used it to treat liver and gallbladder ailments. Russian healers used it for inflammations, high blood pressure, and for abnormal uterine bleeding. American Indians recognize barberry as similar to Oregon grape.

Remedies For

Cholagogue, hepatic, anti-emetic, bitter, laxative.

Ayurvedic Action: Diuretic, antibilious, refrigerant, stomachic, bitter tonic, antiperiodic, alterative, antipyretic.

Used for the treatment as an antibiotic, immune stimulant, for treating pinkeye, high blood pressure.

One study showed that the herb may shrink some tumors. Another study shoed that it has anti-inflammatory properties, useful for treating arthritis. More work is needed in this case.

Indications: Barberry is one of the best remedies for correcting liver function and promoting the flow of bile. It is indicated when there is an inflammation of the gall-bladder or in the presence of gall stones. When jaundice occurs due to a congested state of the liver, Barberry is also indicated. As a bitter tonic with mild laxative effects, it is used with weak or debilitated people to strengthen and cleanse the system The herb is believed to have the ability to reduce an enlarged spleen. It acts against malaria.

Herbalists Recommend Barberry as a Stimulating Tonic Hepatic: Influences the mucosa generally, removing mucoid accumulations and controlling excess secretion. Improves appetite, digestion and assimilation. Indicated for gouty constitutions. Felter considered barberry much like Hydrastis and could be employed for many of the uses of that scarce and high-priced drug. Barberry tends to dilate the blood vessels, thereby lowering blood pressure.

A teaspoon of the root will purge the bowels, or use an infusion of the berries with wine for the same purpose. A decoction of either berries or root bark makes a good mouthwash or gargle for mouth and throat irritations. The fresh juice of the fruit is also said to strengthen the gums and relieve pyorrhea when brushed on or applied directly to the gums.

Ayurvedic Applications

For bile and urinary conditions, Pitta detoxification, and congestion of abdomen and pelvic cavities; rheumatism, scarlet fever, brain disorders, heat, thirst, nausea; small amounts-tonic; large doses-purgative;

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excellent herb for jaundice, during pregnancy, mild laxative, periodic neuralgia, fevers, skin diseases, vomiting in pregnancy; fruit-mild laxative/purgative for children, fevers, blood purifier, malaria, gastric and duodenal ulcers; sores, jaundice, enlarged liver and spleen, and regulates liver functioning, diabetes, and toxins/ama (with twice as much turmeric); destroys toxins, reduces body fat (with turmeric); renal calculi, abdominal and pelvic congestion; G.I. stimulant, reduces blood pressure.

Description

A common garden bush, native to Europe and the British Isles, naturalized in North America, flowering in April and May. It is a deciduous shrub that grows in hard, gravelly soil in the northeastern states and sometimes in rich soils in the western states. The root is yellow on the outside and its bark has a bitter taste.

The stems, growing from 3 to 8 feet high, are reddish when young but turn dirty gray when older. The leaves are obovate to oval and have a soft, bristly point The small, yellow flowers appear from April to June and hang from the branches in clusters.

The bright red, oblong berries, ripening in August and September, have an agreeable acid taste and should be eaten only when ripe.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 1 teaspoonful of the bark into a cup of cold water and bring to the boil. Leave for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: In gall-bladder diseases it combines well with Fringe Tree Bark and Black Root.

Safety

Avoid During Pregnancy: Barberry may stimulate the uterus.

In high doses, barberry can cause nausea, vomiting, convulsions, hazardous drops in blood pressure, and depression of the heart rate and breathing. If you are suffering from heart disease or chronic respiratory system, do not take large doses of this herb and use only with the approval of your doctor.

Use only in medicinal amounts. If the herb causes dizziness or faintness, stop using the herb immediately.

Do not give to children under 2 years old. For older children and those older than 65, start with a lower strength than recommended above.

BARDANA

Name: Burdock.

Biological Name: Arctium lappa.

Other Names: Bardana, burr seed, clotbur, cocklebur, grass burdock, hardock, hareburr, hurrburr, turkey burrseed, Burdock, Niu bang zi.

Parts Used: Root, seed, leaves.

Active Compounds

Burdock root contains high amounts of inulin and mucilage. This may explain its soothing effects on the gastrointestinal tract. Bitter constituents in the root may also explain the traditional use of burdock to improve digestion. It also contains polyacetylenes that have been shown to have anti-microbial

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activity. Burdock root and fruit also have the ability to slightly lower blood sugar (hypoglycemic effect). Even though test-tube and animal studies have indicated some anti-tumor activity for burdock root, these results have not been duplicated in human studies.

History

In traditional herbal texts, burdock root is described as a blood purifier or alterative. Burdock root was believed to clear the bloodstream of toxins. It was used both internally and externally for eczema and psoriasis as well as to treat painful joints and as a diuretic. In traditional Chinese medicine, burdock root in combination with other herbs is used to treat sore throats, tonsillitis, colds, and even measles. It is eaten as a vegetable in Japan and elsewhere. Burdock root has recently become popular as part of a tea to treat cancer. To date, only minimal research has substantiated this application.

Remedies For

Antibiotic, antifungal, diaphoretic, diuretic, mild laxative, antipyretic.

—Beneficial in treating:

—acne

—psoriasis

—rheumatoid arthritis

A root decoction of burdock has been reported useful in the treatment of gout, rheumatism, and dropsy. In Japan, the tender leaf stalks and roots are boiled twice to remove the tough fibers and then eaten. It is a diuretic without the side effects such as irritation and nausea. Externally, the leaves have been applied for benign skin tumors and in the treatment of knee joint swellings unresponsive to other medicines. Burdock poultices have been used in the treatment of gout, severe bloody bruises and burns.

Recent scientific experiments have shown that burdock root extracts is a diuretic and inhibited tumors in animals. Extracts also lowered blood sugar and have estrogenic activity. It also has antibacterial and antifungal properties. The active antibacterial compound is identified as lactone. The experiments show that burdock has potential in treatment of female complaints, in diabetes, and for bacterial or fungal infection.

Description

Burdock is native to Asia and Europe. The root is the primary source of most herbal preparations. The root becomes very soft with chewing and tastes sweet, with a mucilaginous texture. Burdock is a biennial plant found along fences, walls, and roadsides, in waste places, and around populated areas. The root is long, fleshy, gray-brown outside, and whitish inside. In its second year, the plant grows a furrowed, reddish, pithy stem with woolly branches. During the first year burdock has only basal leaves. Both basal and stem leaves are oblong-cordate to cordate, green and hairy on top and downy gray beneath. The purple flowers appear in loose corymbose clusters from July to September.

Dosage

Traditional herbalists recommend 2–4 ml of burdock root tincture per day. For the dried root preparation in capsule form, the common amount to take is 1–2 grams three times per day. Many herbal preparations

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combine burdock root with other alterative herbs such as yellow dock, red clover, or cleavers.

Safety

Use of burdock root in the dosages listed here is generally safe. However, burdock root in large quantities may stimulate the uterus and therefore should be used with caution during pregnancy. Do not use burdock if you are suffering from diarrhea.

BARLEY

Name: Barley.

Biological Name: Hordeum vulgare

Other Names: Pearl barley, Scotch barley, Barley.

Parts Used: Grain.

Remedies For

Barley is believed to help to clean out the arteries and valves around the heart that have become plugged up with layers of old fat buildup. The green juice from young barley shoots possess strong anti-inflammatory activity. A study done in Japan showed that powdered juice significantly reduced arthritis and gastric ulcers in laboratory animals. Barley gives increased strength and muscle expansion to those who work out regularly with weights.

When hulled barley (pearl barley) is cooked, a mucilaginous substance is obtained which makes a good source of nutrition for those with throat or stomach problems. Mixing barley water with milk makes a soothing preparation for stomach and intestinal irritation. Barley has also been recommended for feverish conditions. The demulcent properties of cooked barley make it useful as an external application for sores and tumors.

Description

Originated in western Asia, Barley was one of the first grains to be cultivated. It is an annual plant that is widely cultivated as a food grain. It's stout, simple stem is hollow and jointed and grows from 11/2 to 3 feet high. The narrow, tapering leaves ascend the stem In two ranks, the third leaf over the first; and their bases form loose sheaths around the stem. The flowers grow in bristly-bearded terminal spikes, producing eventually the elliptic, furrowed barley grains.

Dosage

Decoction: Wash 2 oz. barley with cold water and ball in 1 cup water for a few minutes. Discard this water and boil the barley in 4 pints of water until the total volume is 2 pints. Strain and use as required.

Barley Water: Wash pearl barley in cold water. Boil 1 part pearl barley in 9 parts water for 20 minutes and strain. A dose is from 1 to 4 oz.

BASIL

Name: Basil.

Biological Name: Ocimum basilicum, Ocimum Sanctum, Ocimum Spp. Mint Family, Labiatae.

Other Names: Basil, Common Basil, Sweet Basil, St. Josephwort, Tulsi, Tulasi, Krishnamul, Kala Tulasi.

Parts Used: Leaf, Herb.

Active Compounds: Volatile oils (up to 28 percent methyl cinnamate).

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History

Basil has a rich and fanciful history. It had been 'Herb royale' to the French, a sign of love to Italians, and a sacred herb in India. The first century A.D. Roman naturalist Pliny reported that basil relieves flatulence, which had been subsequently proven true. In the Far East, the herb had been used as a cough medicine, and in Africa, it has been used to expel worms. American colonists considered Basil the essential ingredient in a snuff used to ease headaches.

Remedies For

Antispasmodic, appetizer, carminative, galactagogue, stomachic.

The tea made from the leaves of the basil plant is used for nausea, gas pains, and dysentery. Tea made with basil and peppercorns is a folk remedy to reduce fever.

Basil is antispasmodic, appetizer, carminative, galactagogue, and stomachic. Basil is vary useful for ailments affecting stomach and the related organs. It is used for stomach cramps, gastric catarrh, vomiting, intestinal catarrh, constipation, and enteritis. It had been sometimes used for whooping cough as an antispasmodic.

Ayurvedic Applications

Action: Antibacterial, antiseptic, antispasmodic, diaphoretic, febrifuge, nervine.

Uses: Coughs, colds, fevers, headaches, lung problems, abdominal distention, absorption, arthritis, colon (air excess), memory, nasal congestion, nerve tissue strengthening, purifies the air; sinus congestion, clears the lungs, heart tonic; it frees ozone from sun's rays and oxygenates the body, cleanses and clears the brain and nerves; relieves depression and the effects of poisons; difficult urination, prevents the accumulation of fat in the body (especially for women after menopause), obstinate skin diseases, arthritis, rheumatism, first stages of many .cancers, builds the immune system. Tulsi contains trace mineral copper (organic form), needed to absorb iron.

Description

An annual plant found wild in the tropical and subtropical regions of the world. The bushy stems grows to 1 to 2 feet high. The toothed leaves are often purplish hued. The flowers vary in color from white to red, sometimes with a tinge of purple, appear from June to September. The plant emits a spicy scent when bruised. This plant is an important ayurvedic herb. It is grown near Indian houses. It is believed to purify air by discharging negative ions. The plant is also believed to possess spiritual powers. For example, it opens heart and mind, gives love, devotion, faith, compassion, and clarity; cleanses the aura and it is believed to give Divine protection in the Hindu Vedas. It is one of the two most sacred plants in India.

Dosage

Juice, infusion, powder, ghee.

Steep 1 tsp of dried herb in 1/2 cup water. Take 1 to 1-1/2 cups a day, mouthful at a time. Can be sweetened with honey if taken for cough.

Safety

US: Generally recognized as safe.

UK: General sales list.

Canada: Approved as an over-the-counter drug.

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France: Traditional Medicine.

Germany: Not yet Commission E approved.

BASTARD CARDAMOM

Name: Cardamom.

Biological Name: Elettaria cardamomum, Elettaria repens Zingiberaceae.

Other Names: Bastard cardamom, cardamom seeds, cardamon, Malabar cardamom, cardamom, Ela, Elachi Yelam.

Description: Cardamom is a perennial plant found commonly in southern India. The simple, erect stems grow to a height of 6 to 10 feet from a thumb-thick, creeping rootstock. The leaves are lanceolate, dark green and glabrous above, lighter and silky beneath. The small, yellowish flowers grow in loose racemes on prostrate flower stems. The fruit is a three-celled-capsule holding up to 18 seeds.

Parts Used: Seed.

Active Compounds

The seeds and pods contain a volatile oil which is used in perfumes and as a stimulant.

History

It is said that cardamom grew in the gardens of the King of Babylon in 720 B.C. The ancient Egyptians chewed cardamoms to whiten their teeth and simultaneously sweeten their breath.

As early as 4 B.C., Indian Ayurvedic medicine texts used the spice to remove fat and as a cure for urinary and skin complaints. Cardamom was used in perfumes by ancient Greeks and Romans, and also recommended by Apicius, a famous Roman epicure, to counteract over-indulgence.

Medicinal Uses

Action: appetizer, carminative, diaphoretic, digestive stimulant, expectorant, stimulant, stomachic.

Uses

—asthma

—belching

—biliousness

—bronchitis

—colds

—cough

—diarrhea

—headache

—hoarseness

—indigestion

—involuntary urination

—nausea

—respiratory disorders

—stomach complaints

—to stimulate the mind

—vomiting

Cardamom seeds are useful for flatulence, but they are usually used as adjuvants with other remedies. They are also used as a spice in cooking and as a flavoring in other medicines. The seeds and pods contain a volatile oil which is used in perfumes and as a stimulant. The aphrodisiac properties of cardamom are extolled in Arabian Nights-the people in Middle East still believe that cardamom possesses such properties. Cardamom is a stimulant, it cools the body in extreme heat and it aids digestion.

Remedy for Celiac Disease: Chinese use powdered cardamom sprinkled on cooked

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cereal to correct celiac disease (intolerance for the gluten commonly occurring in children, marked by frequent diarrhea and continual digestive problems.)

Dosage

Infusion (don't boil seeds), powder, milk decoction.

BATCHELORS BUTTONS

Name: Tansy.

Biological Name: Tanacetum vulgare Compositae.

Other Names: Tansy, Batchelors Buttons, hindheel, common tansy, bitter buttons, parsley fern, ginger plant, golden buttons.

Parts Used: Aerial parts.

Active Compounds

—Volatile oil, thujone, sabinene, camphor, l,8-cineole, umbellulone, a-pinene, bornyl acetate and germacrene D.

—Sesquiterpene lactones; parthenolide, artemorin, tatridin, 11,13-dehydrodesacetyl-matricarin, l-epiludovicin-C.

—Flavonoids; apigenin, diosmetin, quercitin, jaceidin, jaceosidin.

Remedies For

Anthelmintic, bitter, carminative, emmenagogue, aromatic, tonic, diaphoretic, vulnerary Seeds-vermifuge.

Tansy is an effective remedy for use in ridding the digestive tract of infestations of worms. Avoid its continued use over a period of time as some of the constituents of the oil are quite dangerous in large dosage. The herb is effective against roundworm and threadworm and may be used in children as an enema. As a bitter it will stimulate the digestive process and ease dyspepsia, having all the actions of a bitter tonic. It may be used as an emmenagogue to stimulate menstruation, but must be avoided during pregnancy. Externally a lotion may be useful in cases of scabies.

CAUTION: AVOID DURING PREGNANCY.

Combinations: For intestinal worms it may be used with Wormwood and a carminative such as Chamomile, in conjunction with a purgative like Senna.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1 teaspoonful of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk twice a day.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

CAUTION: AVOID DURING PREGNANCY. AN OVERDOSE MAY PROVE FATAL. BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL WHEN USING THIS HERB. NOT RECOMMENDED.

Do not exceed the dosage or use this herb for an extended period of time as the constituents are quite dangerous in large dosage. Use only under the supervision of a qualified professional.

BAY LAUREL

Latin Name: Laurus nobilis.

Other Names: Sweet Bay, True Laurel, Roman Laurel, Noble Laurel, Daphne, Bay Tree, Grecian Laurel.

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A Remedy For

Although scientific studies have not yet been conducted to confirm its effectiveness, Bay Laurel is sometimes added to toothpaste and deodorant because of its antibacterial action.

It is also recommended as an external treatment for insect bites, sprains, and rheumatic complaints. Some herbalists believe Bay Laurel is helpful in preventing migraine headaches and in aiding digestive difficulties. As a folk remedy, it was sometimes used as a uterine stimulant. Bay Laurel is used in aromatherapy for muscular and arthritis pain.

What It Is; Why It Works

The Bay Laurel is native to the Mediterranean region, where it is known more for its culinary than medicinal value.

The strong aromatic whole leaves of the Bay Laurel are used as a seasoning in casseroles, soups, and stews. The evergreen leaves of the laurel were made into wreaths by Greeks in ancient times to crown Olympic champions. Bay Laurel leaves and berries are valued medicinally for their oils, which show some antibacterial and antiviral action. They are also noted for their ability to repel insects.

Avoid If...

Do not use Bay Laurel if you are prone to allergies. It has been known to cause skin irritation.

Special Cautions

Some types of laurel plants are poisonous. Be sure to use only Bay Laurel.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Due to its historical use as a uterine stimulant, Bay Laurel should be avoided during pregnancy and nursing.

How to Prepare

To prepare Bay Laurel tea, add 1 to 2 teaspoons of crushed leaves per cup of boiling water, steep 10 minutes, then drain before drinking. For use on the skin, mix 10 drops of the essential oil with base oil (jojoba or sweet almond) or aloe gel.

Typical Dosage

There are no guidelines on record. Use according to package instructions.

BEAN TREFOIL

Name: Bogbean.

Biological Name: Menyanthes trifoliata Menyanthaceae.

Other Names: Buckbean, Marsh Trefoil, water shamrock, bogbean, bitter trefoil, marsh clover, bog myrtle, bitterworm, brook bean, bean trefoil, moonflower.

Parts Used: Leaves.

Active Compounds

Anthraquinone derivatives, including emodin, aloe-emodin, chrysophanol and rhein glycosides, frangula-emodin, rhamnicoside alaterin and physcion, Flavonoid glycosides.

Remedies For

Bitter, diuretic, cholagogue, anti-rheumatic, tonic, cathartic, anthelmintic, emetic.

Bogbean is a most useful herb for the treatment of rheumatism, osteo-arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. It has a stimulating

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effect upon the walls of the colon which will act as an aperient, but it should not be used to help rheumatism where there is any colitis or diarrhea.

It has a marked stimulating action on the digestive juices and on bile-flow and so will aid in debilitated states that are due to sluggish digestion, indigestion and problems of the liver and gall-bladder.

Kloss, in the book "Back to Eden" describes the medicinal properties of bogbean thus: "An excellent remedy in stomach catarrh, rheumatism, scrofula, scurvy, intermittent fevers, jaundice, dyspepsia, liver and kidney troubles. It expels worms. When taken in large doses it acts as an emetic. Promotes digestion by increasing the production of gastric juice."

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: For the treatment of rheumatic conditions it will combine well with Black Cohosh and Celery Seed.

Bear's Foot

Name: Lady's Mantle.

Biological Name: Alchemilla vulgaris Rosaceae.

Other Names: Lady's Mantle, Lions Foot, Common Lady's Mantle, bear's foot, common alchemil.

Parts Used: The leaves and flowering shoots.

Active Compounds

Tannins, consisting mainly of glycosides of ellagic acid Salicylic acid, a trace.

Remedies For

Astringent, diuretic, anti-inflammatory, emmenagogue, vulnerary. This and other species of Alchemilla have been widely used in folk medicine throughout Europe.

Lady's Mantle helps reduce pains associated with periods as well as ameliorating excessive bleeding. It also has a role to play in easing the changes of the menopause.

As an emmenagogue it stimulates the proper menstrual flow if there is any resistance. However, Lady's Mantle is a useful uterine astringent, used in both menorrhagia and metrorrhagia. Its astringency provides a role in the treatment of diarrhea and as a mouthwash for sores and ulcers and as a gargle for laryngitis.

Combinations: Combines well with most remedies.

Description

Commonly found in Europe. An aggregate of closely related species, typically herbaceous perennials, 6–18 in. leaves cloak shaped and pleated. Small yellowish-green flowers in summer.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day. To help diarrhea and as a mouthwash or lotion, a stronger dosage is made by boiling the herb for a few minutes to extract all the tannin.

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Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No Information Available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Beans

Latin Name: Phaseolus vulgaris.

A Remedy For

—Kidney and bladder stones

—Urinary tract infections

Homeopathic practitioners recommend this herb for diabetes and heart conditions. In folk medicine, it is used to increase urine flow and relieve diabetes.

What It Is; Why It Works

The Bean plant grows 1 to 2 feet high and when in bloom boasts white, pink, and lilac flowers. Only the crushed pods are used for medicinal purposes. They have a mild diuretic action, helping to flush excess water from the system.

The plant is believed to have originated in India, but now grows worldwide. Probably because of the pods' resemblance to the male reproductive organ, Beans were worshipped in ancient Egypt, and it was verboten to eat them. Today, Jewish High Priests cannot eat Beans on the Day of Atonement. In Italy, they are distributed to poor people on the anniversary of a death.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of this herb.

Special Cautions

Large quantities of raw pods or beans can cause severe digestive distress. However, customary dosages of tea made from the pods produce no side effects.

Possible Drug Interactions

There are no known drug interactions.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No information is available.

How to Prepare

To make a tea, pour boiling water over 2.5 grams (About 11/2 teaspoonfuls) of crushed pods, steep for 10 to 15 minutes, and strain.

Typical Dosage

The usual daily dosage is 5 to 15 grams (about 3 to 10 teaspoonfuls). Strengths of commercial preparations may vary. Follow the manufacturer's labeling whenever available.

Overdosage

A massive overdose of raw beans can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach pain.

Bearberry

Name: Uva Ursi.

Biological Name: Arctostaphylos uva-ursi Heath family, Ericaceae.

Other Names: Bearberry, Bear's grape, Crowberry, Foxberry, Hog cranberry, Kinnikinnick, Mealberry, Arberry, Mountain Box, Mountain Cranberry, Red bearberry, sagackhomi, sandberry, upland cranberry, uva ursi, universe vine, wild cranberry, arberry.

Parts Used: Leaves.

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Active Compounds

Bearberry leaves contain arbutin, a powerful astringent that has antiseptic properties. The leaf is also rich in tannins, useful for tanning leather. The glycoside arbutin is the active ingredient in uva ursi. Arbutin is present in fairly high amounts (up to 10%) in uva ursi. It has been shown to kill bacteria in the urine. Before it can act, however, the sugar portion of the arbutin and its attached small molecule (known as hydoquinone) must be broken apart. The urine must be alkaline for this to happen. Hydroquinone is a very powerful anti-microbial agent and is responsible for uva ursi's ability to treat urinary tract infections. Arbutin has also been shown to increase the anti-inflammatory effect of synthetic cortisone.

History

Folk healers have used bearberry leaves to make a tea that is used an a tonic and as a diuretic in many parts of the world. The Cheyenne Indians drank the tea for back sprains; others have used it for venereal diseases.

Remedies For

Urinary tract infection.

Barberry leaves are used to treat bladder and kidney infections. The plant is believed to have urinary antiseptic properties.

It helps to reduce accumulations of uric acid and to relive the pain of bladder stones and gravel. It is used to alleviate chronic cystitis. The tea or tincture is used for bronchitis, nephritis, and kidney stones.

Description

A low growing, trailing evergreen shrub, 4 to 6 inches high. The bark is dark brown or somewhat reddish. The leaves are dark green, leathery, oval and taper toward the base. Dense, drooping clusters of pinkish-white, waxy, urn shaped flowers appear in April-June. The bright red berries ripen in Autumn and last through the winter.

Dosage

Soak the leaves in alcohol or brandy, then add 1 tsp. soaked leaves to 1 cup boiling water. Drink 2 to 3 cups a day, cold.

Tincture: Take 10 to 20 drops in water, 3 to 4 times a day.

For alcohol based tinctures, many people take 5 ml three times per day. Herbal extracts in capsules or tablets (containing 20% arbutin) in an amount of 250–500 mg three times per day can also be taken. Use of uva ursi should be limited to no more than 14 days. To ensure alkaline urine, 6–8 grams of sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) mixed in a glass of water can be drunk. Individuals with high blood pressure should not take baking soda. Do not take it for more than 14 days.

Safety

Excessive use of bearberry can lead to stomach distress, and prolonged use can produce chronic poisoning. Some people may experience mild nausea after taking uva ursi. Avoid taking acidic agents such as vitamin C or fruit juice, while using uva ursi. Do not take if you are pregnant or if you are lactating.

BEARBERRY

Name: Cascara.

Biological Name: Rhamnus purshiana Rhamnaceae.

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Other Names: Cascara sagrada, sacred bark, Purshiana bark, persian bark, chittem bark, bearberry, California buchthorn, Cascara.

Parts Used: Bark.

Active Compounds

Cascara bark is high in hydroxyanthraquinone glycosides called cascarosides. Resins, tannins, and lipids make up the bulk of the other bark ingredients. Cascarosides have a cathartic action, inducing the large intestine to increase its muscular contraction (peristalsis), resulting in bowel movement. The basis of Cascara's laxative effect is the presence of a mixture of anthraquinones, either free (aloe-emodin) or as sugar derivatives (glycosides). The free anthraquinones remain in the intestines and cause catharsis by irritating the intestinal wall.

Those anthraquinones present in the plant as sugar derivatives are largely absorbed from the intestine, circulate through the blood stream, and eventually stimulate the nerve center in the lower part of the intestine, which causes a laxative effect. No synthetic substance can match the mild and speedy action of the holy bark. It is marketed in pills, powders, and fluidextracts by many pharmaceutical companies.

History

Northern California Indians introduced this herb, which they called sacred bark, to sixteenth-century Spanish explorers. Being much milder in its laxative action than the herb buckthorn, cascara became popular in Europe as a treatment for constipation. Cascara has been part of the U.S. Pharmacopoeia since 1890. The bark is very bitter and disagreeable to the taste of many people. Take it immediately after meals, or upon retiring.

Remedies For

Purgative, bitter tonic.

Cascara is useful for the treatment of constipation. Cascara is a purgative and a bitter tonic.

It is one of the oldest, time-proven, and most reliable remedies for chronic constipation. It is not habit forming. It is a good intestinal tonic. An excellent remedy for gallstones and increases the secretion of bile. Good for liver complaints; especially enlarged liver. Aqueous extracts of Cascara have been found to be antiviral against herpes Simplex virus II and vaccinia virus in cell culture.

Description

Cascara is a small- to medium-size tree native to the provinces and states of the Pacific coast, including British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and Northern California. The bark of the tree is removed, cut into small pieces, and dried for one year before being used medicinally. Fresh bark has an emetic, or vomit-inducing, property and therefore is not used.

Dosage

Only the dried form of cascara should be used. Two capsules containing dried cascara can be taken up to two times per day. As a tincture, 1–5 ml per day is generally taken. It is important to drink eight 6-ounce glasses of water throughout the day. Cascara should be taken for a maximum of eight to ten days. Home preparation: Boil 1 tsp. Of bark in a covered container of 1.5 pints of water for about 0.5 hour, at a slow boil. Allow liquid

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to cool slowly in the closed container. Drink cold, 1 swallow or 1 tbsp. at a time, 1 to 2 cups per day.

Safety

Women who are pregnant or lactating should not use cascara without the advice of a physician. Those with an intestinal obstruction should not employ this herb. Long-term use or abuse of cascara may cause a loss of electrolytes (especially the mineral potassium) or weaken the colon. Loss of potassium may potentiate the action of digitalis-like medications with fatal consequences. Fresh bark should not be used. It should be at least one year old prior to usage.

Bearded Darnel

Name: Bearded Darnel.

Biological Name: Lolium temulentum.

Other Names: Cheat, tare, bearded darnel.

Parts Used: Seed.

Remedies For

Bearded darnel is sometimes used by doctors to treat dizziness, insomnia, blood congestion, and stomach problems. It may also be used for skin problems like herpes, scurf, and sores.

THIS HERB IS POISONOUS. DO NOT USE.

Description

Bearded dame is an annual plant that occurs as a hated weed in grain fields, waste places, moist farm fields, and along roadsides. The stiff, round, hollow stalk grows to a height of 1 to 3 feet and bears long, linear, flat leaves that are rolled up when young. The flowers grow in a terminal spike consisting of 5- to 7-flowered spikelets, each of which is embraced along almost its full length by a bract. Long, stiff bristles point upward from the flowers. The seed is small, yellow–brown to orange–brown, ovate, and somewhat compressed.

Safety

This herb is poisonous in large quantities and is not to be used without medical direction. Nonpoisonous remedies are available for all its uses, both internal and external.

DO NOT USE THIS HERB.

Bear's Garlic

Name: Bear's Garlic.

Biological Name: Allium ursinum.

Other Names: Ransoms, ramsons, bear's garlic.

Parts Used: The whole plant.

Remedies For

Astringent, expectorant.

Bear's garlic is said to be helpful in arteriosclerosis, including advanced conditions, for liver problems, and for pinworms. It is also good for diarrhea, colic, and lack of appetite. It has been used to treat gastrointestinal catarrh with both diarrhea and constipation, as well as emphysema With bronchitis. It has been found to effect a slow, long-lasting lowering of blood pressure. In general, it can be used like garlic.

Description

Bear's garlic is a perennial plant that grows in moist Woods, woody ravines, and shady places, congregating in large patches of growth. An onion-like root sends a somewhat angular stem to a height of 6 to 16 inches

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and also sprouts two large, petioled, shiny, lanceolate leaves. From April to June the pure white flowers appear, characterized by a garlicky smell. The plant's black seeds are spread mostly by ants.

Dosage

Use fresh herb (the bulb can be dried but not the rest of the plant). It is best to use it as a salad green, as a vegetable, or in soup.

Bear's Weed

Name: Yerba Santa.

Biological Name: Eriodictyon glutinosum.

Other Names: Yerba Santa, Consumptive's weed, gum plant, bear's weed, mountain balm, tar weed.

Parts Used: Leaves.

Remedies For

Tonic, expectorant, aromatic.

This herb was traditionally used for laryngitis, chronic bronchitis, asthma, and various catarrhal lung ailments. Effective when there is excessive discharge from the nose. Good in rheumatism. Can be applied as a poultice for sores, insect bites, sprains, and bruises.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Beaumont Root

Name: Black Root.

Biological Name: Leptandra virginica Scrophulariaceae.

Other Names: Culvers Root, Culvers Physic, Physic Root, Veronicastrum virginica, black root, tall speedwell, tall veronica, beaumont root, leptandra, hini, oxadoddy, whorlywort.

Parts Used: Rhizome and root.

Active Compounds

Active constituents are largely unknown. However it is known to contain:

—Volatile oil with esters of cinnamic acid, methoxycinnamic acid and dimethoxycinnamic acid

—Saponins

—Mannitol, dextrose, tannin etc.

Remedies For

Cholagogue, cathartic, hepatic, emetic, laxative, diaphoretic, anti-spasmodic.

Black Root is used as a reliever of liver congestion and for an inflamed gall-bladder (cholecystitis). When jaundice is due to liver congestion, Black Root is used for its treatment. Chronic constipation can often be due to a liver dysfunction, in which case this herb is also ideal.

Kings Dispensatory describes its specific indications and uses as Drowsiness, dizziness, and mental depression, with tenderness and heavy pain in the hepatic region, the tongue is coated markedly white, the skin is yellow, there is a bitter taste, cold extremities, nausea and dull frontal headache; thirst, with inability to drink; restlessness, with insomnia; diarrhea, with half-digested passages, or clay-colored evacuations; enfeebled portal circulation, with lassitude and gloomy and depressed mental state.

Description

This herb is a native of North America. It

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was introduced to European herbalism via the Seneca Indians. The slender, simple stem grows to a height of 2 to 5 feet from a horizontal, woody rootstock.

The lanceolate, finely serrate leaves grow in whorls of four to seven; and the numerous white flowers grow in panicled spikes. The fruit is an oblong-ovate, flattened, many-seeded capsule. The root should be dug up in the autumn and stored for a year before use.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb in a cup of cold water and bring to the boil. Simmer for 10 minutes. Take one cup three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: Black Root will combine well with Barberry and Dandelion. For hemorrhoids combine with Stone Root.

Safety

Do not use the fresh root. It is toxic. Use only dried root.

CAUTION: SHOULD BE EXERCISE WHEN USING THIS HERB. IT CONTAINS EPTANDRIN, A VERY STRONG PURGATIVE AND EMETIC. USE ONLY WITH MEDICAL SUPERVISION. DO NOT DRINK MORE THAN A CUP OF THE TEA PER DAY.

Beccabunga

Name: Brooklime.

Biological Name: Veronica beccabunga.

Other Names: Beccabunga, mouth-smart, neckweed, speedwell, water pimpernel, water purslain, brooklime.

Remedies For

Diuretic, emmenagogue, febrifuge.

The fresh juice of the herb is mildly diuretic. In older herbals, it is also recommended for intestinal disorders and anemia. Once prized, it is little used today.

Description

Brookline is a succulent perennial plant found growing in wet places, as in streams and ditches. Its round stem grows 1 to 1–1/2 feet high from a creeping, jointed rootstock. The leaves are glabrous, ovate or broadly elliptical, and finely serrate. The small blue flowers grow in axillary spikes from May to August.

Dosage

Juice: Take 1 tsp. to 3 tbsp., three times a day. Take in milk if the stomach is sensitive.

Safety: No information is available. Not used now.

Bedstraw

Name: Cleavers.

Biological Name: Galium aparine.

Other Names: Bedstraw, clivers, cleavers, coachweed, cleaverwort, goose grass, goose's hair, grip grass, gravel grass, gosling weed, hedge-burrs, clabber grass, catchweed, milk sweet, poor robin, loveman, stick-a-back, sweethearts, savoyan, scratchweed, cleaverwort.

Parts Used: The herb.

Remedies For

Antispasmodic, diaphoretic, diuretic, vulnerary.

The predominant uses for cleavers are external,

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although the tea has been recommended for stomach and Intestinal catarrh and for Irritations of mucous membranes, including those of the urinary tract. The juice of the fresh plant or a tea made from the dried plant is popular for skin problems. The juice or tea is applied daily and allowed to dry (before each application, wash the affected area with rectified alcohol, burning the cloth each time).

If preferred, make a salve for the skin by mixing the fresh juice with butter (renew every 3 hours and burn the cloth used to apply it). Applying the crushed fresh leaves directly is also said to be helpful for skin problems and for stopping bleeding. Cleavers is popularly used in Europe for healing wounds and sores.

Description

Cleavers is an annual plant found in moist or grassy places and along riverbanks and fences in Canada, the eastern half of the U.S., and the Pacific coast. A slender taproot produces the weak, square, procumbent or climbing, prickly stem that grows from 2 to 6 feet long. The rough, oblong-lanceolate to almost linear leaves occur in whorls of 6 or 8 around the stem. The small, white or greenish-white flowers grow in cymes on long, axillary peduncies from May to September. The fruit consists of two joined, bristly, globular, one-seeded carpels.

Dosage

Use the juice of the fresh plant or dry the plant immediately to keep for later use.

Infusion: Steep I oz. dried herb in I pint warm (not boiling) water for 2 hours. Take 2 to 8 tbsp., three or four times a day.

Tincture: Take 20 to 30 drops in water, as required.

For kidney and bladder troubles, particularly burning or suppressed urine, use with uva ursi, buchu, and marshmallow.

Safety

Cleavers are very astringent due to its high tannin content. Take only two weeks at a time, and then skip one or two weeks.

Beechdrops

Name: Blue Cohosh.

Biological Name: Caulophylum thalictroides Berberidaceae.

Other Names: Papoose Root, Squawroot, Blue Cohosh, Beechdrops, blueberry, blue ginseng, squaw root, yellow ginseng.

Parts Used: Root & Rhizome.

Active Compounds

Alkaloids, including the lupin-type alkaloids caulophylline (= methylcytisine), anagyrine, baptifoline; and magnoflorine. Saponins known as caulosaponin.

History

The Indians believed that blue cohosh triggered labor and hastened childbirth. Blue Cohosh does contain a very powerful ingredient that can induce labor. So, it should be done only under the supervision of a medical professional. Indians also used this herb to treat sore throat, hiccups, infant colic, epilepsy, and arthritis. Some Indian women drank a strong decoction as a contraceptive.

The herb was introduced in US pharmacopoeia as a labor inducer from 1882 to 1905. Contemporary herbalists recommend the

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herb as a menstruation promoter, labor inducer, asthma, anxiety, cough, arthritis, and high blood pressure.

Remedies For

Uterine tonic, emmenagogue, anti-spasmodic, anti-rheumatic, diuretic.

Blue Cohosh is an excellent uterine tonic that may be used in any situation where there is a weakness or loss of tone. It may be used at any time during pregnancy if there is a threat of miscarriage.(Consult your phycisian.) Similarly, because of its anti-spasmodic action, it will ease false labor pains and dysmenorrhŒa. However, when labor does ensue, the use of Blue Cohosh just before birth will help ensure an easy delivery. In all these cases it is a safe herb to use. As an emmenagogue it can be used to bring on a delayed or suppressed menstruation whilst ensuring that the pain that sometimes accompanies it is relieved. Blue Cohosh may be used in cases where an anti-spasmodic is needed such as in colic, asthma or nervous coughs. It has a reputation for easing rheumatic pain.

Animal studies in India have shown that this herb inhibits ovulation; thus, there may be something to the American Indians' use it as a contraceptive.

Eurpean researchers have identified some antibiotic and immune-stimulating properties in blue cohosh. It may have potential in treating bladder and kidney infections.

Description

Blue cohosh is a perennial plant found in eastern North America, near running streams, around swamps, and in other moist places. The round, simple, erect stem grows from a knotty rootstock and bears a large, tri-pinnate leaf whose leaflets are oval, petioled, and irregularly lobed. The 6-petaled, yellow–green flowers are borne in a raceme or panicle. The fruit Is a pea-sized, dark blue berry borne on a fleshy stalk.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 1 teaspoonful of the dried root in a cup of water, bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 0.5–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: To strengthen the uterus blue cohosh may be used with False Unicorn, Motherwort and/or Yarrow. To increase its anti-spasmodic effects combine with Scullcap and/or Black Cohosh.

Safety: Blue cohosh can be very irritating to mucous surfaces and can cause dermatitis on contact. Do not inhale or introduce it to your eyes. Children have been poisoned by the berries.

No one with high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, glaucoma, or a history of stroke should use blue cohosh.

BEECHDROPS

Name: Beechdrops.

Biological Name: Epifagus virginiana.

Other Names: Caner root, pinedrops, beechdrops.

Parts Used: The plant.

Remedies For

Astringent.

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Beechdrops is used externally for wounds, bruises, cuts, skin irritation, and other conditions where an astringent is called for.

Description

This native North American plant grows as a parasite on the roots of beech trees. It has a scaly, tuberous root and a branching, slender, leafless stem that reaches a height of 12 to 18 inches. The entire plant is a dud, red color.

Bee's Nest Plant

Name: Wild Carrot.

Biological Name: Daucus carrota Umbelliferae.

Other Names: Wild Carrot, Queen Anne's Lace, Birds Nest Weed, Devils Plague, garden carrot, bee's nest plant, bird's nest root.

Parts Used: Dried aerial parts and seeds.

Active Compounds

—Flavonoids

—Daucine, an alkaloid

—Volatile oil

—Petroselinic acid, tannins

Remedies For

Diuretic, antilithic, carminative, antispasmodic, stimulant.

The volatile oil from Wild Carrot is an active urinary antiseptic. It is useful in the treatment of cystitis and prostatitis. It has been considered a specific in the treatment of kidney stones for a long time. In the treatment of gout and rheumatism it is used in combination with other remedies to provide its cleansing diuretic action. The seeds can be used as a settling carminative agent for the relief of flatulence and colic.

Combinations: For urinary infections it may be used with Yarrow and Bearberry. For kidney stones use it with Hydrangea or Gravel Root..

Description

Europe, Asia, North America & N. Africa.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1 teaspoonful of the dried herb and let infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day. To prepare an infusion of the seeds, use 1/3–1 teaspoonful to a cup of water.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Beleric Myrobalan

Name: Beleric Myrobalan.

Biological Name: Terminalia belerica Combretaceae family.

Other Names: Beleric Myrobalan, Bibhitaki, bhaira, Bahira, Bilhitak, bahera, Vibhidhaka

Description

This herb, which is an important Ayurvedic herb, is a tree found throughout the Indian forests and plains.

Parts Used: Fruit.

Remedies For

Action: Anthelmintic, antiseptic, astringent, expectorant, laxative, lithotriptic, rejuvenative, tonic.

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Action & Uses in Ayurveda and Siddha

Rasam, Kashayam, mathura vipakam, ushna veeryam, pitta kapha hararm, good for vision, hair. Internally for kasam, krimi, swarbhangam.

Externally antiseptic, lotion. Paste for pitta swellings, eye diseases.

Action and Uses in Unani

Tonic to brain and stomach, liquifies matter, acts as astringent, expells touda and safra, dries ruthoobath, headache, piles, chronic diarrhea.

Uses: The fruit is one among the triphala of ayurveda. It is useful in asthma, biliousness, bronchitis, inflammations, sore throat, and treating the diseases of eyes, nose, heart and bladder.

Dosage

Infusion, decoction, powder, paste.

Safety

This herb may raise the "vayu" as defined in ayurveda. No other information available. Do not use without supervision of a qualified practitioner.

BELLADONNA

Name: Belladonna.

Biological Name: Atropa belladonna.

Other Names: Black cherry, deadly nightshade, dwale, poison black cherry, belladonna.

Parts Used: Leaves, tops, berries.

Remedies For

Antispasmodic, calmative, diaphoretic, diuretic, narcotic.

The narcotic action of belladonna can produce paralysis by affecting the central nervous system. Not to be used without medical direction.

Description

Belladonna is a perennial plant found occasionally in waste places in the eastern states of the U.S., more commonly in European pastures, mountain forests, ruins, and waste places.

A thick, creeping, whitish, fleshy rootstock sends up an erect, leafy stem that usually splits into three branches and attains a height of up to 5 feet. The dull green, ovate leaves grow in pairs, one leaf being half as large as the other.

Belladonna flowers are solitary, bell-shaped, and dull brown to dark purple in color. The fruit is a sweet-tasting, black, shiny berry about the size of a cherry.

Safety

The narcotic action of belladonna can produce paralysis by affecting the central nervous system. Not to be used without medical direction.

NOT RECOMMENDED.

BENNET

Name: Bennet.

Biological Name: Geum urbanum.

Other Names: Blessed herb, European avens, star of the earth, yellow avens, bennet.

Parts Used: Rootstock, flowering herb.

Remedies For

Astringent, styptic, tonic.

As an astringent, bennet is useful for diarrhea; and it also makes a good gargle for gum problems and halitosis. It promotes appetite

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and acts as a tonic during convalescence. A wine extract of the root promotes digestion in older people and can also be used for chronic bronchial catarrh and for intermittent fever.

Description

Bennet is a perennial plant that grows around hedges, fences, walls, and in deciduous forests, preferring shady places. The rootstock is 1 to 3 inches long, finger-thick, yellow to brown outside, pinkish or pink-violet inside.

The erect, hairy stem is red at the bottom and grows to a height of 1 to 2 feet The lower leaves are lyrate and pinnate, the upper ternate or trifid; the leaflets broadly ovate and serrate.

From June to August, the plant bears bright yellow, star-shaped, drooping flowers.

Dosage

Decoction: Use 1 tsp. dried root or herb with 1 cup water. Take 1 cup a day.

Tincture (*from root*): Take 10 drops, 3 times a day.

Powder: Take 1/4 to 1/2 tsp., 3 times a day.

Safety: No information available.

BERGAMOT

Latin Name: Citrus bergamia.

A Remedy For

Aromatherapists recommend Bergamot oil for depression, anxiety, and poor digestion. They believe the fragrance has an energizing and mood lifting effect and can restore emotional balance in people afflicted by fear, sadness, and grief. Such claims have not, however, been verified by scientific trials.

What It Is; Why It Works

The highest quality Bergamot oil is cold-pressed from the rind of the Bergamot orange. This method yields a pleasantly fresh orange fragrance. Bergamot has a long history of use as an ingredient in perfumes and sun tanning products.

However, since the discovery that it increases sensitivity to the sun—causing burning and blistering—its use as a tanning agent has come to a halt. Laboratory studies show that Bergamot can also be useful as an insect repellent. The herb Oswego Tea (Monarda didyma) is sometimes referred to as Bergamot and should not be confused with the oil obtained from Bergamot oranges.

Avoid If...

Do not use Bergamot if you have sensitive skin. The oil may give you a rash.

Special Cautions

Never take essential oils internally. They are extremely potent and can be poisonous.

Possible Drug Interactions

If you are taking a prescription medication that increases sensitivity to the sun, avoid using Bergamot.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Bergamot is not recommended if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

How to Prepare

The essential oil of Bergamot fruit is expressed from the rind and sold commercially.

Typical Dosage

A few drops of Bergamot oil are typically administered by inhalation or diffusion. Use

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according to package instructions. Bergamot is frequently combined with other oils, so read the label carefully for all ingredients.

BESHAKAPORE

Name: Red Hogweed.

Biological Name: Boerhavia diffusa, Boerhavia procumbens, Boerhavia repens Nyctaginaceae.

Other Names: Red Hogweed, Spreading Hogweed, Beshakapore, Lal Punarvava, Punarvava, Raktpunarnava (red) Punarnanava, Thazhuthama.

Description

This herb is found in India. This is one of the prized ayurvedic herbs. It contains an alkaloid punarnavine.

The herb is a diuretic that acts on the glomeruli of the kidney through increasing the heart-beats and strengthening and raising the blood pressure as a result.

Parts Used: Herb, root.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action: bitter, diaphoretic, diuretic, emetic, expectorant, laxative, rejuvenative, stomachic

Root: anthelmintic, febrifuge, purgative

Uses

—Red

—(chronic) alcoholism

—asthma

—edema

—eye diseases

—heart disease

—hemorrhoids

—insomnia

—jaundice

—kidney stones

—nervous system disorders

—rat and snake bites

—rheumatism

—skin diseases

—urethritis

—wasting diseases

—White

All the actions of the read mentioned above plus

—anemia

—cough

—intestinal colic

—kidney disorders

The decoction of the root is taken as a remedy in rheumatism, impure blood, cough, asthma, hernia, dropsy, chest-pain, piles, and swellings. It is also used for gonorrhea, and internal inflammations.

Dosage

Juice, decoction, infusion, powder, paste, oil, sugar water, or honey paste

Safety

No information about the safety of this herb is available.

Use caution. Ayurvedic herbs are often taken in combination with others to neutralize the toxicity one herb with the opposing effect of other. Do not take except under the supervision of a qualified professional.

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Besom

Name: Broom.

Biological Name: Sarothamnus scoparius Leguminosea.

Other Names: Scotch Broom, Irish Broom, Broomtops, Besom, Broom, broom tops.

Parts Used: Flowering tops, seed.

Active Compounds

Quinolizidine alkaloids: Sparteine, lupanine, l3-hydroxy-lupanine, isosparteine, ammodendrine, N-methylangustifoline, dihydro-lupanine and various derivatives. Phenethylamines such as tyramine, hydroxytyramine, epinine and salsolidine Isoflavoneglycosidesincludinggenistein,3-0-methylorobol, 7-glucosyl-3-0-methylorobol, scoparin and sarothamnoside. Other flavonoids such as quercitin, isoquercitin and spiraeoside Essential oil, containing cis-3-hexen-l-ol, l-octen-3-ol, benzylalcohol, phenol, cresols, guiacol, eugenol, isovaleric acid and benzoic acid Miscellaneous; caffeic and p-coumaric acids, tannins and pigments. The seeds contain lectins (phytohaemagglutinins).

Remedies For

Cardioactive diuretic, hypertensive, peripheral vasoconstrictor, astringent.

Broom is a valuable remedy where there is a weak heart and low blood pressure. Since it is also a diuretic and produces peripheral constriction of the blood vessels while increasing the efficiency of each stroke of the heart, it can be used where water retention occurs due to heart weakness. Broom is used in cases of over-profuse menstruation.

Kloss describes the action of this herb in his book "Back to Eden" thus: "It is excellent for dropsy, toothache, ague, gout, sciatica, swelling of the spleen, jaundice, kidney and bladder troubles, especially in cases of gravel in the bladder.

Makes an excellent remedy when used with uva ursi, cleavers, and dandelion for cleansing the kidneys and bladder, and to increase the flow of urine.

Broom is of great service in dropsy caused by a weak heart. Makes a good ointment for lice or vermin."

Description

Broom is native to British Isles and Europe. It is naturalized in North America, South Africa and parts of Asia.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1 teaspoonful of the dried herb and let infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: Broom can be combined with Lily of the Valley and Hawthorn Berries when treating the heart.

Safety

CAUTION: CONSUMING HIGH DOSES OF THIS HERB CAN CAUSE UNWANTED SYMPTOMS OF IMPAIRED VISION, VOMITING AND PROFUSE SWEATING.

Do not use Broom in pregnancy or hypertension. Broom contains alkaloids and hydroxytyramine, and should not be used except under proper medical supervision.

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Bethroot

Name: Birthroot.

Biological Name: Trillium pendulum.

Other Names: Bethroot, coughroot, ground lily, Indian balm, Indian shamrock, jew's-harp plant, lamb's quarter, milk ipecac, nodding wakerobin, pariswort, rattlesnake root, snakebite, three-leaved nightshade, trillium, wakerobin, birthroot.

Parts Used: Rootstock.

Remedies For

Antiseptic, astringent, diaphoretic, emmenagogue, expectorant, tonic.

Birthroot is said to be used for coughs, bronchial problems, hemorrhage from the lungs, pulmonary consumption, and, especially when boiled in milk, for diarrhea. It is also used, both internally and externally, for female problems. For insect bites and stings, a poultice or a salve is used. American Indians used it as an aid in childbirth.

Description

Birthroot is a perennial plant found in rich soils and shady woods of the central and western states of the U.S. Growing to a height of 10 to 15 inches, the simple stem arises from an oblong, tuberous rootstock and bears, only at the very top, a whorl of three round-ovate, acuminate leaves. Single yellow–white to reddish–white flowers appear in May and June above the leaves.

Dosage

Decoction: Use 1 tsp. root with 1 cup water (or milk). Drink either hot or cold just before going to bed. Take 1 to 2 cups a day.

Tincture: Take 1/4 to 1/2 tsp. at a time.

Betony

Name: Betony.

Biological Name: Stachys officinalis.

Other Names: Lousewort, purple betony, wood betony, betony.

Parts Used: Flowering herb.

Remedies For

Antheimintic, astringent, carminative, diuretic, expectorant, vulnerary. Betony is recommended by herbalists for asthma and bronchitis, as well as for heartburn. The infusion is also popularly used for neurasthenia, bladder and kidney problems, spitting blood, and excessive sweating; regular use is recommended for varicose veins.

A strong decoction is said to be effective against worms. The juice of the plant was used to heal cuts, external ulcers, and old sores. If you have a sprain, make a poultice of the leaves and put on the injured part.

Description

Betony is a perennial plant found in old European gardens, damp or dry meadows, on sunny slopes, and along forest paths. The hairy, unbranched or slightly branched, quadrangular stem grows to a height of 6 to 24 inches.

The leaves are opposite, more or less hairy on both sides, the lower leaves oblong-cordate, the upper more lanceolate. Red-purple flowers appear from June to August.

Dosage

Infusion: Use 1 to 2 tsp. per cup of water; take 1 to 2 cups during the day, a mouthful at a time.

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Decoction: Use 2 tsp. with 1/2 cup water; sweeten to taste. Take 1/2 cup per day, a mouthful at a time.

BETONY

Name: Wood Betony.

Biological Name: Betonica officinalis Labiatae.

Other Names: Wood Betony, Bishopswort, Betony, Stachys betonica, Lousewort.

Parts Used: Dried aerial parts.

Active Compounds

Alkaloids; stachydrine and betonicine.

Miscellaneous: Betaine, choline, tannins.

Remedies For

Nervine, bitter, aperient, stomachic, tonic, aromatic, antiscorbutic. Betony gently tones and strengthens the nervous system whilst also has a relaxing action.

Useful for treatment of the nervous debility associated with anxiety and tension.

It will ease headaches and neuralgia when they are of nervous origin, but especially those caused by hypertension.

Traditionally used for headache, neuralgia, pains in the head and face, heartburn, indigestion, cramps in the stomach, jaundice, palsy, convulsions, gout, colic, pains, all bilious and nervous complaints, dropsy, colds, la grippe, tuberculosis, worms, delirium, poisonous snake and insect bites.

Combinations: For the treatment of nervous headache it combines well with Skullcap. In hypertensive headaches use in combination with appropriate hypotensives.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 2–6 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

BHANGRA

Name: Bhringaraj.

Biological Name: Eclipta alba, Eclipta erecta

Other Names: Bhringaraj, Bhangra, Babri, Galagara, Gunta-kalagara, Kaikeshi, Karisha-langanni, Karisirang-kanni, Kesharaji, Kesuri, Kesuria, Kesutti, Maka, Mochkand.

Description: This herb is found throughout India and the southwestern U.S..

Parts Used: Herb, roots, leaves.

MEDICINAL USES

Action

Herb: Alterative, antipyretic, hemostatic, laxative, nervine, rejuvenative, tonic, vulnerary.

—Roots and leaves are cholagogues.

—Root-tonic, alterative, emetic, purgative.

—Leaf juice-hepatic tonic and deobstruent.

Applications

Aging: The herb maintains and rejuvenates hair, teeth, bones, memory, sight, and hearing.

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—cirrhosis

—ear aches

Hair Tonic: Oil removes graying, balding, makes the hair darker. Make a hair oil by boiling leaf juice in coconut oil. This is useful to remove gray hair and balding.

—hepatitis

—headache

Rejuvenative: For kidneys, and liver. It improves complexion.

—skin disorders

Sleep: Oil promotes deep sleep.

—spleen, enlarged

Uterine Hemorrhaging: Use two to four ounces of leaf decoction twice daily. Roots and leaves are largely used alone or in combination with ajowan seeds in derangements of the liver and gall bladder.

They have also been used as substitutes for Taraxacum, a liver tonic.

Dosage

Infusions, decoction, powder, medicated oil and ghee.

Safety

CAUTION: THIS HERB CAN CAUSE SEVERE CHILLS.

Do not use without the supervision of a qualified practitioner.

BHUTRIN

Name: Lemon grass.

Biological Name: Andropogon citratus Gramineae family.

Other Names: Lemon grass, Gandhatrana, Hari-chaha, Bhutrin, Aginghas, Bhustrina, Chae-Kashmiri, Chayapul, Chippagaddi, Gandha bela, Gandha-Bena, Gavatichaha, ginger-grass, Karpoorpul, Lilicha, Majjige-hullu, Mikkotiu, Nimmagaddi, Olancha, Patichachaha, Penguin, Purhali-hullu, Rosha grass, Sugandhichaha, sweet-rush, Takratrani, Vasanapulla, Vashanup-pulla.

Description

This herb grows wild in gardens in India, Sri Lanka and other tropics. Its oil is used in aromatherapy.

Parts Used: Herb, essential oil.

Constituents

Volatile oil: The main constituent of lemon-grass oil is the substance citrol or citral, which occurs in it in quantities varying from about 70 % up to 85 % or more. The oil is obtained by distillation from fresh plant.

Remedies For

Action

—Stimulant, diaphoretic, anti-spasmodic

—Oil is carminative and tonic.

Uses

For Fevers: Use with with ginger, sugar, cinnamon. You can also use a tea or decoction made from the leaves as a diaphoretic in fever.

For Disordered Menstruation, for Congestive and Neuralgic forms of Dysmnorrhoea, for Dropsical Conditions Caused by Chronic Malaria: Use herb with black pepper.

For Vomiting and Diarrhea: It is carminative and tonic to the intestinal mucous membrane.

For Colic, Flatulence, Fever, Catarrh: Use an infusion of leaves with pudina, black-pepper, dried ginger and sugarcandy.

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The lemon-grass oil is useful as a carminative in flatulent and spasmodic affections of the bowels, colic, and gastric irritability. It is also used in treating cholera with obstinate vomiting, by controlling vomiting and aiding the process of reaction. Use 3 to 6 drops of lemongrass oil on a piece of sugar cube or in emulsion.

For Painful Affections—Lumbago, Chronic Rheumatism, Neuralgia, Sprains, etc.: Mix lemongrass oil with an equal quantity of pure coconut oil. Use it externally as an embrocation or liniment.

Dosage

—Infusion of the leaves (1 in 5) and oil decoction of leaves (4 ozs of the grass to 1 pint of boiling water) powder.

BILAI-KAND

Name: Vidari-kanda.

Biological Name: Ipomoea digitata, Ipomoea paniculata, Ipomoea mauritiana Convolvulaceae.

Other Names: Vidari-kanda, Bilai-kand Palmudukan kizhangu, Bhumikusmanda, Balaikand.

Description: This herb grows in India.

Parts Used: Tuberous root.

Medicinal Applications

Action: alterative, aphrodisiac, cholagogue, demulcent, diuretic, emmenagogue, galactogogue, mucilaginous, rejuvenative, tonic.

Uses

—debility

—increases secretion of milk

—enlarged liver and spleen

—increases weight

—moderates menstrual discharge

—poor digestion

—TB

Dosage

Powder, confection, decoction, milk decoction.

Safety

No information about the safety of this herb is available.

USE CAUTION: AYURVEDIC HERBS ARE OFTEN TAKEN IN COMBINATION WITH OTHERS TO NEUTRALIZE THE TOXICITY ONE HERB WITH THE OPPOSING EFFECT OF OTHER.

Do not take except under the supervision of a qualified professional.

BILBERRY

Name: Bilberry.

Biological Name: Vaccinium myrtillus.

Other Names:Black whortleberry, blueberry, burren myrle, dyeberry, huckleberry, hurleberry, whinberry, whortleberry, wineberry, Bilberry.

Parts Used: Fruit.

Active Compounds

Anthocyanosides, the bioflavonoid complex in bilberries, are potent antioxidants. They support normal formation of connective tissue and strengthen capillaries in the body. Anthocyanosides may also improve capillary and venous blood flow.

History

The dried berries and leaves of bilberry have

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been recommended for a wide variety of conditions, including scurvy, urinary tract infections, and kidney stones.

Perhaps the most sound historical application is the use of the dried berries for the treatment of diarrhea. Modern research of bilberry was partly based on its use by British World War II pilots, who noticed that their night vision improved when they ate bilberry jam prior to night bombing raids.

Traditionally, both the leaves and berries of this shrub has been used as an astringent. A decoction of the berries was employed for fevers.

The juice of the berries was used as a gargle and mouthwash for catarrh.

Extracts of bilberry have antiviral in cell culture for herpes simplex virus II, influenza, and vaccinia viruses.

Kills or inhibits the growth of funguses, yeasts, and bacteria. It also kills protozoans such as Trichomonas vaginalis. Bilberry is an anti-inflammatory herb. Anthocyanins in the herb act to prevent capillary fragility and inhibit platelet aggregation. Also has potential for the prevention of thrombosis and may reverse attacks of angina from results of animal studies. Was found to prevent atherosclerosis in cholesterol loaded animals.

Further, bilberry is an antihistamine; it improves vision and has potential for the treatment of pigmentary retinitis.

Remedies For

Bilberry may help in the treatment of:

—Atherosclerosis

—Bruising

—Cataracts

—Circulation

—Diabetes

—Macular degeneration

—Night blindness

—Retinopathy

—Varicose veins

Recent research showed that Bilberry extract has promising anti-ulcer activity, both preventive and curative. It also has shown anti-cancer properties in animal experiments.

When administered to diabetes patients, Bilberry normalized capillary collagen thickness and blood sugar levels in humans and animals.

Description

A close relative of American blueberry, bilberry grows in northern Europe, Canada, and the United States. The ripe berries are used. The leaves may also contain beneficial compounds.

A shrubby perennial plant that grows in the sandy areas of the northern US and in the woods and forest meadows of Europe. The angular, green, branched stem grows from a creeping rootstock to a height of 1 to 1.5 feet.

The leaves are alternate, obovate to ovate, weakly serrate, dark green and shiny on top and 0.5 to 1 inch long. The reddish pink or red and white, solitary, auxiliary flowers have a pitcher shaped corolla and appear in May and June. The fruit is usually blue-black; it may be red in some cases. The berry is 5-seeded.

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Dosage

People often take 240–480 mg per day of bilberry herbal extract in capsules or tablets standardized to provide 25% anthocyanosides.

Berries: 1 teaspoon dried berries with 1 cup of water, 1 cup per day.

Tincture: Take 15 to 40 drops in water, 3 or more times a day as needed.

Safety

In recommended amounts, there are no known side effects with bilberry extract.

Bilberry does not interact with commonly prescribed drugs, and there are no known contraindications to its use during pregnancy or lactation.

Leaves can produce symptoms of poisoning if used over long periods.

BIRCH (WHITE)

Name: White Birch.

Biological Name: Betula alba.

Other Names: White birch, canoe birch, paper birch, birch (white)

Parts Used: Young leaves, bark.

Active Compounds

Flavonoids, mainly hyperoside, with luteolin and quercetin glycosides.

Remedies For

Astringent, diuretic, diaphoretic.

Birch leaves act as an effective remedy for cystitis and other infections of the urinary system as well as removing excess water from the body. Perhaps because of this cleansing diuretic activity, the plant has been used for gout, rheumatism and mild arthritic pain. The bark will ease muscle pain if it is applied externally, putting the fresh, wet internal side of the bark against the skin.

The leaf tea made by infusion is said to eliminate gravel and dissolve kidney stones when taken daily for a time, 1 to 11/2 cups a day. It is also used as a wash or bath additive for skin problems.

A decoction of the leaves is sometimes recommended for baldness (or try the fresh expressed juice). The decoction is sometimes used as a mild sedative for those who have difficulty sleeping.

For chronic or severe skin problems, a decoction of birch bark is sometimes used as a wash or bath additive. The inner bark contains an oil which is sometimes substituted for wintergreen in liniment.

Description

White birch is a tree found growing to a height of 65 feet in the northern U.S., Canada, and northern Europe. It has white bark which can be peeled off in horizontal strips. its leaves are cordate, bright green above and lighter beneath, serrate, and hairy. Both male and female trees bear flowers; but only the female will bear seed cones.

Dosage

Use only fresh leaves.

Infusion: Use 1 tbsp. leaves with 1/2 cup hot water.

Decoction: Use 1 tbsp. leaves with 1/2 cup water. Boil briefly, let stand for 2 hours, then add 1/2 tsp. bicarbonate of soda. Take up to 1 cup a day.

Juice: Take 1 tsp. at a time, as required.

Combinations: For urinary infections white

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birch may be used with Bearberry. For rheumatic pain combine it with Black Willow.

Bird's Tongue

Name: Bird's Tongue.

Biological Name: Fraxinus excelsior.

Other Names: European ash, bird's tongue.

Parts Used: bark, leaves.

Remedies For

—*Bark*: diuretic, febrifuge.

—*Leaves*: cathartic.

The bark is primarily used to reduce fever, but it is also some-times used to expel intestinal worms. The leaf tea is popular in Europe as a mild purgative and is often used for rheumatism.

Description

Bird's tongue is a European tree, 100 to 130 feet high, commonly planted in parks and along streets and found wild in woods and along river- and stream-banks. The leaves are opposite and odd pinnate, consisting of seven ovate, acute leaflets. The small flowers appear before or with the leaves in spring. The fruit is one-seeded.

Dosage

Use the bark of young branches and twigs.

Infusion: Use 1 to 2 tsp. leaves to 1/2 cup hot water. Steep 2 to 3 minutes, then strain. Take 1 to 11/2 cups a day, unsweetened, a mouthful at a time.

Decoction: Use 1 tsp. bark to 1/2 cup water. Boil briefly, steep for 2 to 3 minutes. Take 1/2 to 1 cup a day, unsweetened, a mouthful at a time. (improve the taste by adding some peppermint or sweet marjoram, if desired.)

Safety: Not known.

Birhatta

Name: Indian Nightshade.

Biological Name: Solanum indicum.

Other Names: Indian Nightshade, Brihati, Kantakari, Birhatta.

Description: This herb is found throughout India.

Parts Used: Fruit, root, plant, seeds.

Remedies For

Actions

Herb: Aphrodisiac, astringent, cardiac tonic, carminative, cordial, resolvent.

Root: Diaphoretic, diuretic, expectorant, stimulant.

Uses:

—Asthma

—catarrh

—chest pains

—chronic fevers

—colic

—cough, dry and spasmodic

—edema

—gas

—scorpion stings

—toothache

—difficult urination

—worms

Dosage: Decoction, powder

Safety: No information is available.

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Bishop's Wort

Name: Nutmeg.

Biological Name: Myristica fragrans.

Other Names: Nutmeg, nutmeg flower, black caraway, flower seed, black cumin, nigella seed, bishop's wort, small fennel flower, Jati, Jatikka.

Description

Nutmeg is a tropical evergreen tree native to Indonesia and cultivated in the West Indies, South Africa, the Molucca Islands, India and other tropical areas. It grows to about 60 feet and produces fruit fifteen to twenty years after planting. The brown, wrinkled, oval fruit contains a kernel which is covered by a bright red membrane. The membrane provides the spice mace, and the kernel the spice nutmeg.

Parts Used: Seed.

History

Nutmeg and mace are different parts of the same fruit of the nutmeg tree. These spices have been appreciated since Roman times. It had been a prized spice. Portuguese and later Dutch tried to monopolize the trading on this spice.

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES

Action

Aromatic, carminative, hallucinogenic, stimulant, expectorant, deobstruent, sialagogue, emmenagogue.

In small quantities, nutmeg acts on the stomach to improve appetite and digestion. Nutmeg oil is sometimes used to dispel flatulence. It is use din perfumes and ointments. Nutmeg is commonly used for seasoning foods. It helps prevent gas and fermentation in the intestinal tract. It is good for nausea and vomiting. It is mildly hallucinogenic.

Safety

Nutmeg is a mild hallucinogenic drug, somewhat like marijuana. In addition to hallucinations and elation, however, eating nutmegs produces stomach pain, double vision, delirium, and other symptoms of poisoning.

CAUTION. EATING AS FEW AS TWO NUTMEGS CAN CAUSE DEATH.

Bitter Apple

Latin Name: Citrullus colocynthis.

Other Names: Colocynth Pulp, Bitter Cucumber.

A Remedy For

Bitter Apple was once used to stimulate bowel movements in cases of constipation, and to treat liver and gallbladder conditions. However, it is a poison that has been replaced by safer medications and its use is no longer recommended. Homeopathic medicine uses highly diluted preparations of Bitter Apple (referred to as Colocynthis) as a remedy for conditions with symptoms of abdominal spasm and griping, such as colic, diarrhea, and menstrual cramps. The effectiveness of these homeopathic solutions has not, however, been verified in clinical trials.

What It Is; Why It Works

A ground-hugging vine, Citrullus colocynthis flourishes in the Mediterranean climate from Spain to Eurasia, producing a small apple–like fruit.

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The fruit's bitter pulp contains compounds that purge the digestive system, causing increased liquid production and irritation to mucous membranes. At one time, Bitter Apple was used therapeutically by preparing a tincture, diluting a few drops in water, and administering small doses. But because even a minor error in dosage can result in poisoning, its use is no longer justified.

Homeopathic preparations of Bitter Apple (Colocynthis) are produced by diluting its active ingredient until no molecular trace of the substance can be detected.

In keeping with the homeopathic law of similars, where "like cures like," this vanishingly weak solution is used as a remedy for the very gastrointestinal symptoms that larger and more dangerous doses of Bitter Apple are known to produce.

Avoid If...

Do not use Bitter Apple in any but its weak homeopathic form. It is poisonous.

Special Cautions

Bitter Apple is highly toxic and, even in small amounts, can be fatal. Use other, safer, laxatives if constipation is a problem.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Do not use Bitter Apple.

How to Prepare

Homeopathic preparations of Bitter Apple (Colocynthis) are available commercially in some pharmacies and health food stores. Do not take any other form of Bitter Apple.

Typical Dosage

Use homeopathic Bitter Apple (Colocynthis) remedies according to package instructions, preferably under the supervision of a qualified practitioner. Never take any other form of Bitter Apple, as even small amounts can prove fatal.

Overdosage

Doses as small as 2 grams can cause death. Symptoms of overdose are vomiting, bloody diarrhea, severe abdominal pain, and excessive urination, which lead to convulsions, paralysis and, if left untreated, death. If you suspect an overdose, seek emergency medical attention immediately.

BITTER ASH

Name: Wahoo.

Biological Name: Euonymus atropurpureus Celastraceae.

Other Names: Wahoo, Spindle Tree, Whahow, wauhoo, Indian root, Indian arrow, Indian arrow wood, strawberry tree, pegwood, bitter ash, burning bush.

Parts Used: Root bark.

Active Compounds

—Cardenolides based on digitoxigenin

—Alkaloids such as asparagine & atropurpurine

—Sterols; euonysterol, atropurpurol, homoeuonysterol

Remedies For

Cholagogue, hepatic, laxative, diuretic, circulatory stimulant, tonic, expectorant, alterative. Wahoo is one of the primary liver herbs.

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It removes congestion from the liver, allowing the free flow of bile and helps the digestive process. It may be used in the treatment of jaundice and gall-bladder problems such as inflammation and pain or congestion due to stones. Relieves constipation from liver or gall-bladder problems.

Through its normalizing action upon the liver it may help in a range of skin problems where there is a possible involvement of the liver. Traditionally used as a laxative, for chest and lung infections, fevers, malaria, dyspepsia, liver disorders, pancreas and spleen troubles as well as for dropsy.

Dosage

Decoction: Pour a cup of water onto 1/2–1 teaspoonful of the bark. Bring to the boil and let infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

CAUTION: USING TOO MUCH WAHOO BARK MAY RESULT IN A SEVERE PURGATIVE ACTION. BE CAREFUL NOT TO USE TOO MUCH AND USE ONLY UNDER PROPER SUPERVISION. NO OTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Bitter Herb

Name: Centaury.

Biological Name: Centaurium erythraea, Centaurium umbellatum, Erythraea centaurium Gentianaceae.

Other Names: Centaury, Century, Feverwort, Bitter herb, common centaury, lesser. centaury, centaury, European Centaury.

Parts Used: Dried aerial parts.

Active Compounds

Secoiridoids: These glycosides are the so-called bitter principles and include sweroside, its m-hydroxybenzoyl esters centapicrin, desacetylcentapicrin, the related glucosides decentapicrin A, B & C, gentiopicroside (=gentiopicrin), swertiamarin.

Alkaloids: Gentianine, gentianidine, gentioflavine.

Xanthone derivatives such as l,a8-dihydroxy-3,5,6,7-tetramethoxyxanthone.

Phenolic acids including protocatechuic, m- and p-hydroxbenzoic, vanillic, syringic, p-coumaric, ferulic and caffeic.

Triterpenes; b-sitosterol, campesterol, brassicsterol, stigmasterol, a- and b-amyrin, erythrodiol.

Remedies For

Bitter, hepatic, appetizer, cholagogue, diaphoretic, digestive, emetic, febrifuge, tonic.

Indications: It may be used whenever a digestive and gastric stimulant is required. Used primarily in appetite loss (anorexia) when it is associated with liver weakness. Centaury is a useful herb in dyspepsia and in any condition where a sluggish digestion is involved. Historically, European centaury was one of the traditional panaceas, having been recommended and used for practically everything except diarrhea.

It stimulates the activity of the salivary, stomach, and intestinal glands, thereby relieving

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constipation and gas and promoting proper digestion. This activity probably accounts for many of its other beneficial effects. The tea is commonly taken for heartburn, colic, suppressed menstruation, and anemia. Taken over a long period, it tends to help in taking off weight. A strong decoction is said to be emetic, a strong infusion diaphoretic, and a light infusion tonic. Externally, a lotion made from European centaury removes skin blemishes like freckles and spots. It is useful for people who lead sedentary lives and who don't get much outdoor exercise.

Description

Native to Europe, including the British Isles, Western Asia, North Africa and naturalized in N. America. European centaury is an annual or biennial plant found all over Europe In damp meadows, forest clearings, and sandy soils. The stem is 6 to 18 inches high, quadrangular to hexagonal, hollow when older, and branched near the top. The basal leaves are ovate and grow in a rosette; the stem leaves are opposite, sessile, and ovate-oblong. The rose-red, funnel-shaped flowers grow in cymes from June to September.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1 teaspoonful of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 5–10 minutes. Drink one cup half an hour before meals.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: In dyspepsia it combines well with Meadowsweet, Marshmallow Root and Chamomile. In anorexia nervosa it is indicated with Burdock Root and Chamomile.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Bitter Orange

Latin Name: Citrus aurantium.

Other Names: Bigarade Orange, Neroli.

A Remedy For

—Appetite loss

—Indigestion

Only the peel has proven medicinal value, and only for digestive problems. However, in folk medicine the flower of Bitter Orange is also used—not only for gastric complaints, but also for problems ranging from nervousness and insomnia to gout and sore throat. In Asian medicine, the flower is used for poor appetite, chest and stomach pain, and vomiting—again without conclusive evidence of therapeutic effect. Homeopathic practitioners use both the peel and the flower as remedies for headache and pain.

What It Is; Why It Works

Bitter Orange comes from a flowering, fruit-bearing evergreen tree native to tropical Asia, but now widely cultivated in the Mediterranean region and elsewhere. The small, unripened fruit are a traditional flavoring in the liqueur Curacao. The peel of the fruit, fresh or dried, soothes spasms in the digestive tract.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Bitter Orange.

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Special Cautions

Frequent contact with the peel can cause skin irritation, including redness, swelling, and blisters. In light-skinned individuals, the drug may heighten sensitivity to sunlight.

Possible Drug Interactions

There are no known drug interactions.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

There is no information available.

How to Prepare

Crushed Bitter Orange peel is available for use in teas. Alcohol solutions (tinctures) and liquid extracts may also be found.

Typical Dosage

Customary daily dosages are:

Crushed Peel: 4 to 6 grams (about 1 teaspoonful)

Tincture: 2 to 3 grams (about one-half teaspoonful)

Extract: 1 to 2 grams (about one-quarter teaspoonful)

Strengths of commercial preparations may vary. Follow the manufacturer's labeling whenever available.

BITTER THISTLE

Name: Blessed Thistle.

Biological Name: Cnicus benedictus Compositae.

Other Names: Holy Thistle, Saint Benedict thistle, spotted thistle, cardin, bitter thistle, blessed cardus, blessed thistle.

Parts Used: Herb.

Active Compounds

The sesquiterpene lactones, such as cnicin, provide the main beneficial effects of blessed thistle. The bitterness of these compounds stimulates digestive activity, including the flow of saliva and secretion of gastric juice, which leads to improved appetite and digestions. There is some evidence that blessed thistle also has anti-inflammatory properties.

History

Folk medicine utilized blessed thistle tea for digestive problems, including gas, constipation, and stomach upset. This herb was also used for liver and gallbladder diseases, in a similar way as its well-known relative, milk thistle.

Monks once grew blessed thistle as a cure for small pox. Early herbalists believed that the herb was a cure-all. They noted that the plant could both prevent and cure headache, provoke sweat, help memory, strengthen the heart and stomach, and cure external problems such as festering sores, boils, and the itch.

Nineteenth century herbalists prescribed an infusion, or tea, made from the plant tops as a treatment for fevers and for liver and respiratory ailments.

Remedies For

Blessed Thistle may be useful in:

—Indigestion and heartburn

—Poor appetite

In herbal medicine today, blessed thistle is used as a contraceptive and to treat cancer as well as infections, heart and liver ailments, and fevers.

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Holy thistle is believed to have great power in the purification and circulation of the blood. It is such a good blood purifier that drinking a cup of thistle tea twice a day will cure chronic headaches.

Also used for stomach and digestive problems, gas in the intestines, constipation, and liver troubles.

It is very effective for dropsy, strengthens the heart, and is good for the liver, lungs, and kidneys. It is claimed that the warm tea given to mothers will produce a good supply of milk. It is also said to be good for girls entering womanhood as a good tonic.

Description

Although native to Europe and Asia, blessed thistle is now cultivated in many areas of the world, including the United States. The leaves, stems, and flowers are all used in herbal preparations. An annual herb, growing to about 2 feet tall.

The brown stem is hairy and erect. The lance shaped leaves have a spiny edges and may be either lobed or cleft (deeply cut.) The plant produces numerous yellow flowers (May–August) arranged in a head at the tip of a branch or stem.

Dosage

Many people take 2 ml three times per day of blessed thistle tincture.

Approximately 2 grams of the dried herb can also be added to 250 ml (1 cup) of boiling water and steeped ten to fifteen minutes to make a tea. Three cups can be drunk each day.

Taken best at bedtime as a preventive of disease.

Safety

Blessed thistle is relatively safe and free from side effects. Anyone with allergies to plants in the daisy family should use blessed thistle cautiously.

Don't make the tea too strong as it may cause vomiting.

BITTERROOT

Name: Dogbane.

Biological Name: Apocynum androsaemifolium.

Other Names: Bitterroot, catchfly, flytrap, honeybloom, milk ipecac, milkweed, mountain hemp, spreading dogbane, wallflower, wandering milkweed, western wallflower, dogbane.

Parts Used: Rootstock.

Remedies For

Cathartic, diaphoretic, emetic, expectorant, stimulant.

Dogbane has been used to relieve dyspepsia, constipation, fever, gallstones, and dropsy. Given in large doses, it is cathartic and emetic. When used, it is generally combined with less harsh medications suitable for the intended purpose.

Description

Dogbane is a native perennial plant found in both the Atlantic and Pacific coastal states, in dry, sandy soils and around the edges of forests. A large, horizontal, milky rootstock sends up a glabrous stem with tough, fibrous bark to a height of 1 to 4 feet. The leaves are opposite, roundish to oblong-ovate or ovate, dark green above, lighter and hairy beneath, and grow on short, reddish petioles. The

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nodding flowers grow in terminal cymes and are pink outside, pink and white striped inside. Flowering time is May to August The fruit is a pair of long slender pods. All parts of the plant contain a milky juice.

Dosage

Not recommended for use without medical direction. DO NOT USE.

Infusion: Steep 1 tsp. rootstock in I pint boiling water. Take cold, 2 to 3 tsp. six times a day.

Tincture: Take 5 to 10 drops in water before meals.

Safety

CAUTION: EATING THE LEAVES HAS KILLED LIVESTOCK.

NOT RECOMMENDED. CONTACT A PHYSICIAN.

BITTERROOT

Name: Gentian.

Biological Name: Gentiana lutea.

Other Names: Gentian, bitterroot, bitterwort, gentian root, yellow gentian, pale gentian, felwort.

Parts Used: Root.

Active Compounds

Gentian contains some of the most bitter substances known, particularly the glycosides gentiopicrin and amarogentin. The taste of these can be detected even when diluted 50,000 times.

Besides stimulating secretion of saliva in the mouth and hydrochloric acid in the stomach, gentiopicrin may protect the liver.

History

Gentian root and other highly bitter plants have been used for centuries in Europe as digestive aids (the well-known Swedish bitters often contain gentian).

Other folk uses included topical use on skin tumors, decreasing fevers, and treatment of diarrhea.1 Its ability to increase digestive function, including production of stomach acid, has since been validated in modern times.

Remedies For

Stomachic, tonic, anthelmintic, antibilious.

Useful for

—Indigestion

—Poor appetite

Purifies blood, good for liver complaints, dysentery, jaundice, excellent for spleen, improves appetite an strengthen digestive organs. Also used for gastritis, indigestion, heartburn, stomach aches; it increases circulation, benefit the female organs, and invigorates the entire system. Useful for fevers, colds, gout, convulsions, scrofula, and dyspepsia as well as for suppressed menstruation and scanty urine.

Description

This plant comes from meadows in Europe and Turkey. It is also cultivated in North America. The root is used medicinally. Several other similar species can be used interchangeably.

Dosage

Up to 20 drops of gentian tincture dissolved in a small glass of water should be sipped, at least fifteen minutes before meals.

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Safety

Gentian should not be used by people suffering from excessive stomach acid, heartburn, stomach ulcers, or gastritis.

BITTERSWEET

Name: Nightshade.

Biological Name: Solanum dulcamara.

Other Names: Bittersweet nightshade, bittersweet, bittersweet herb, bittersweet stems, bittersweet twigs, blue nightshade, felonwort, fever twig, garden nightshade, nightshade, nightshade vine, scarlet berry, staff vine, violet bloom, woody, woody nightshade.

Parts Used: Bark of the root, twigs.

Remedies For

Anodyne, diuretic, emetic, purgative.

Although bittersweet nightshade is a relatively weak poison, it is used almost exclusively for external problems. Use it as a poultice for gout and herpes.

Combined with chamomile it makes a good ointment for swellings, bruises, sprains, and corns. For skin diseases and sores, combine with yellow dock.

Description

Bittersweet nightshade is a perennial woody vine found in moist areas, around houses, and among hedges and thickets in the eastern and north-central states, the Pacific coast, and in Europe. The shrubby, thumb-thick, ashy-green, somewhat angular, climbing stern can reach a length of up to 10 feet. The dark green (or purplish when young) leaves are alternate and variable in shape. The purple, star-shaped flowers appear from May to August. The fruit is a scarlet, bitter berry that hangs on the vine for months after the leaves have fallen.

Safety

CAUTION: THIS IS POISONOUS. DO NOT TAKE INTERNALLY WITHOUT THE SUPERVISION OF A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL. NOT RECOMMENDED.

BLACK ALDER

Name: Black Alder.

Biological Name: Alnus glutinosa.

Other Names: European alder, owle, black alder

Parts Used: Bark, leaves.

Remedies For

Astringent, bitter, emetic, hemostatic.

Fresh alder bark will cause vomiting, so use dried bark except for emetic purposes.

A decoction of the bark makes a good gargle for sore throat and pharyngitis. The powdered bark and the leaves have been used as an internal astringent and tonic, and the bark also as an internal and external hemostatic against hemorrhage. Boiling the inner bark in vinegar produces a useful external wash for lice and for skin problems such as scabies and scabs. It can be used to clean your teeth.

Description

Black alder is a deciduous tree up to 80 feet high, growing in Europe, Asia, North Africa, and locally in North America. It is found in cooler regions, forming dense stands around swamps and along streams and rivers. The alternate leaves of black alder are round, usually doubly serrate, and scalloped. The

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flowers are segregated by sex into separate catkins. The female flowers are reddish-purple. They develop into hard cones that contain the seeds.

Dosage

Decoction: Boil I tsp. bark or leaves in 1 cup water. For internal use, take 1 to 2 cups a day, in mouthful doses.

Tincture: A dose is from 1/2 to 1 tsp.

Powder: A dose is from 8 to 12 grains.

Black Birch

Name: Black birch.

Biological Name: Betula lenta.

Other Names: Black birch, cherry birch, mahogany birch, mountain mahogany, spice birch, sweet birch.

Parts Used: Inner bark and small twigs (leaves)

Remedies For

Anthelmintic, astringent, diuretic.

Leaf tea is used for urinary problems and to expel intestinal worms. A tea made from the inner bark makes a good mouthwash, and taken internally is good for diarrhea, rheumatism, gout and boils. The tea makes a good bark for canker sores (mouth ulcer). It is also used sometimes for stones in the kidneys and bladder. It is believed to purify the blood. It is also used to make root beer.

An oil similar to oil of wintergreen can be distilled from the inner bark and twigs.

Description

Black birch is a tree that grows 60 to 80 feet high. The bark and little twigs of the birch tree has a splendid flavor similar to that of wintergreen. The bark is brown when the tree is young, dark gray later, and is horizontally striped. On old trees the bark is more irregularly broken.

The ovate, pointed leaves occur alternately in pairs and are finely serrate. The male trees bear flowers about 3 inches long. Female catkins produce flowers about 1 inch long. The male flowers appear in the fall and the female the following spring.

Dosage

Decoction: Use 1 tsp. inner bark or leaves with 1 cup water. Take 1 to 2 cups a day.

Tincture: A dose is 1/4 to 1/2 tsp.

Black Catechu

Name: Black Catechu.

Biological Name: Acacia catechu Leguminosae.

Other Names: Cutch, Dark Catechu, Black Catechu.

Parts Used: Extract from leaves and young shoots.

Active Compounds

—Tannins, catechin, phlobatannins including catechutanninc acid

—Flavonoids including quercitin, quercetrin, fisetin

—Miscellaneous; gums and resins, pigments.

Remedies For

Astringent: The herb may be used in chronic diarrhea, dysentery and chronic catarrh. Useful for arresting excessive mucous discharges and checking hemorrhages, it is also recommended as a local application for sore mouths and gums. Some research has

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shown Acacia catachu to be hypotensive.

This herb was used for treating chronic diarrhea, chronic catarrh, colliquative diarrhea & chronic dysentery.

Description: This herb is found in India and Burma.

Dosage

An infusion may be made with 0.3–2 g of the dried herb.

The tincture is 1:5 in 45% alcohol at a dose of between 2.5–5 ml.

Black Cohosh

Name: Black Cohosh.

Biological Name: Cimicifuga racemosa, Cimicifuga heracleifolia, Cimicifuga dahurica, Cimicifuga foetida, Ranunculaceae (Buttercup family).

Other Names: Black snakeroot, bugbane, squawroot, bugwort, rattleroot, rattleweed, rattlesnale's root, richweed, Black Cohosh, Cimicifuga, Sheng ma, Chinese black cohosh.

Parts Used: Root.

Active Compounds

Black cohosh contains several important ingredients, including triterpene glycosides (*e.g.*, acetin and cimicifugoside) and isoflavones (*e.g.*, formononetin). Other constituents include aromatic acids, tannins, resins, fatty acids, starches, and sugars. Formononetin is the active element in the herb that binds to estrogen receptor sites, inducing an estrogen-like activity in the body.

As a woman approaches menopause, the signals between the ovaries and pituitary gland diminish, slowing down estrogen production and increasing luteinizing hormone (LH) secretions. Hot flashes can result from these hormonal changes. Clinical studies from Germany have demonstrated that an alcohol extract of black cohosh decreases LH secretions in menopausal women.

History

Native American Indians valued the herb and used it for many conditions, ranging from gynecological problems to rattlesnake bites. Some nineteenth-century American physicians used black cohosh for problems such as fever, menstrual cramps, arthritis, and insomnia.

Remedies For

Diaphoretic, antipyretic, antifungal, antibacterial.

Black cohosh helps in the treatment of:

—Menopause

—Painful menstruation

—Uterine spasms

The primary traditional use of black cohosh has been as a relaxant, sedative, and antispasmodic. Its effectiveness as a remedy for dysmenorrhea has not been successfully proven, but research suggests a pharmacological basis for its use in treating rheumatism and neuralgia.

Traditional Chinese Medicine: Clears wind heat, regulates the circulation of qi, relieves pain. It can be used for headache caused by wind heat; gingivitis; hives; diarrhea; venting eruptive skin diseases, such as measles, in the early stages; and prolapsed internal organs, such as the anus and uterus.

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The Chinese say that this herb "lifts the sunken"; therefore, it is used to direct other herbs upward and is also indicated for prolapsed organs. North American cimicifuga may be similar though not identical to the Chinese variety.

Description: Black Cohosh is a shrub-like plant native to the eastern deciduous forests of North America, ranging from southern Ontario to Georgia, north to Wisconsin and West to Arkansas.

The strong odor of black cohosh flowers acts as an insect repellent. It is thus also known as bugbane.

Black cohosh is a stately perennial, 3–8 feet tall, topped by a long plume of white flowers (June–September). The leaves are large and pinnately compound; the leaflets are irregularly shaped with toothed edges.

The dried root and rhizome are the constituents utilized medicinally. When wild harvested, the root is black in color. Cohosh, an Algonquin Indian word meaning "rough," refers to its gnarly root structure.

Dosage

Black cohosh can be taken in several forms:

Crude, dried root, or rhizome (300–2,000 mg per day).

Solid, dry powdered extract (250 mg three times per day).

Tinctures can be taken at 2–4 ml per day. Standardized extracts of the herb are available and contain 1 mg of deoxyacteine per tablet. The usual amount is 40 mg twice per day. Black cohosh can be taken for up to six months, and then it should be discontinued.

Safety

Black cohosh has an estrogen-like effect, and women who are pregnant or lactating should not use the herb. Large doses of this herb may cause abdominal pain, nausea, headaches, and dizziness. Women taking estrogen therapy should consult a physician before using black cohosh.

Large doses of black cohosh cause symptoms of poisoning, particularly nausea and dizziness, and can also provoke miscarriage.

Black cohosh should not be used by those who have full-blown measles or those who are having trouble breathing. It should also not be used by those with excess in the upper regions and deficiency in the lower part of the body.

Black Creeper

Name: Sarsaparilla.

Biological Name: Ichnocarpus fruitescens, Apocymene frutescens, Echites frutscens, Smilax officinalis Liliaceae, Apocynaceae.

Other Names: Black Creeper, Sarsaparilla, Sariva, Kalisar, Dudhilata, Sugandhi, Honduras sarsaparilla, red sarsaparilla, Spanish sarsaparilla, Tu fu ling, Dwipautra Paalvalli, Sariva, Siamalata.

Description

Sarsaparilla is a tropical American perennial plant. It is also found throughout India and in the Himalayas under 5,000 feet. Its long, tuberous rootstock produces a vine which trails on the ground and climbs by means of tendrils growing in pairs from the petioles of the alternate, obicular to ovate, evergreen leaves. The small, greenish flowers grow in axillary umbels.

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Parts Used: Root, milk, stalk, leaves.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action

The root is an alterative tonic, diuretic, diaphoretic, carminative.

Uses

Sarsaparilla root is said to be good for gout, rheumatism, colds, fevers, and catarrhal problems, as well as for relieving flatulence. A tea made from it has also been used externally for skin problems, scrofula, and ringworm. Sarsaparilla would be classed generally as a "blood purifier." It was once commonly taken as a tonic in spring.

It is also used for venereal diseases, herpes, skin diseases, arthritis, rheumatism, gout, epilepsy, insanity, chronic nervous diseases, abdominal distention, intestinal gas, debility, impotence, turbid urine.

Sarsaparilla purifies the urino-genital tract, dispelling all infection and inflammation. Its purifying action wends to the nervous system and it helps cleanse the mind of negative emotions; therefore it is useful in many nervous disorders. Sarsaparilla's diaphoretic and blood-cleansing action is useful for rheumatic inflammation. For herpes and venereal complaints, it can be combined with gentian. It stimulates the production of reproductive hormones and has tonic action on the sexual organs.

As a blood-purifier it works well with burdock root. Externally, it can be used as a wash for genital sores or herpes, or as a hot fomentation for painful, arthritic joints.

Dosage

Decoction, powder, pills.

Infusion: Steep 1 tsp. rootstock in 1 cup water. Take 1 to 2 cups a day.

Tincture: A dose is from 30 to 60 drops.

Safety

No information about the safety of this herb is available.

USE CAUTION: AYURVEDIC HERBS ARE OFTEN TAKEN IN COMBINATION WITH OTHERS TO NEUTRALIZE THE TOXICITY ONE HERB WITH THE OPPOSING EFFECT OF OTHER. DO NOT TAKE EXCEPT UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL.

BLACK ELDER

Name: Elderberry.

Biological Name: Sambucus nigra.

Other Names: Black elder, black-berried European elder, boor tree, bountry, elder, ellanwood, ellhorn, European elder, German Elder, elderberry.

Parts Used: Root, bark, young shoots, leaves, flowers, fruit.

Active Compounds

The flavonoids, including quercetin, are believed to account for the therapeutic effects of the elderberry flowers and berries.

According to laboratory research, an extract from the leaves, combined with St. john's wort and soapwort, inhibits the influenza virus and herpes simplex virus.

A study in humans determined that an extract of elderberries is an effective treatment for influenza. Animal studies have shown the flowers to have anti-inflammatory properties.

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History

Elderberries have long been used as food, particularly in the dried form. Elderberry wine, pie, and lemonade are some of the popular ways to prepare this plant as food. The leaves were touted to be pain relieving and to promote healing of injuries when applied as a poultice. Native Americans used the plant for infections, coughs, and skin conditions.

Remedies For

Elderberry is useful For

—Common cold/sore throat

—Herpes simplex

—Inflammation

—Influenza (flu)

Elderberry juice is a wonderful as a cleanser. It is very rich. Dilute it with other juices if you wish. The juice is especially good as a tonic for the reproductive and glandular system, and elderberry blossoms, when dried, can be used as a kidney tea. A tea made from the leaves and young shoots increases the production of urine and helps to eliminate excess water from the body. In proper dosages, black elder remedies can be used for urinary problems, kidney problems, dropsy, edema, rheumatic ailments, and constipation.

The tea of the flowers promotes perspiration and is used particularly for colds and for rheumatic complaints. The berries are not to be eaten raw and the fresh juice is not to be used. Cook the berries lightly, whether it is for eating or for the juice. An elderberry jam is mildly laxative and is suitable for irritated or inflamed intestines and for small children.

Description

Elderberry grows in Europe and North America. The flowers and berries are used therapeutically. Black elder may take the form of a shrub or small tree, 10 to 30 feet high. It is generally found in moist, shady places and among underbrush. It is also cultivated.

The bark is light brown near the bottom of the stem, gray-white higher up, somewhat torn and stippled with warts. The leaves are opposite, odd-pinnate; the leaflets ovate, acuminate, finely serrate, dark green. In June and July black elder sports cymes of white to yellow white flowers, which develop into berries that turn from green through red-brown to shiny black.

Dosage

Liquid elderberry extract is taken in amounts of 5 ml (for children) to 10 ml (for adults) twice per day. A tea made from 3–5 grams of the dried flowers steeped in 250 ml (1 cup) boiling water for ten to fifteen minutes may also be drunk three times per day.

The bark and root bark must be used fresh.

Use 1 level tsp. Bark or root bark to 1/2 cup boiling water. Take no more than 1 cup a day, a mouthful at a time.

Safety

There are no known adverse reactions to elderberry.

The fresh plant is poisonous. American elder's toxic content is higher than that of the European elder. However, when cooked, the berries are harmless. Some people have reported dizziness and even stupor when taking elder as a laxative.

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Black Horehound

Name: Black Horehound.

Biological Name: Ballota nigra Labiatae.

Parts Used: Dried aerial parts.

Active Compounds

Diterpenoids, including marrubiin, ballonigrin, ballotinone (=7-oxomarrubiin), ballotenol and 7-acetoxymarrubiin.

Remedies For

Anti-emetic, nervine, astringent, emmenagogue, expectorant.

Black Horehound is an excellent remedy for the settling of nausea and vomiting where the cause lies within the nervous system rather than in the stomach. For example, it may be used in motion sickness.

This herb will also be of value in helping the nausea and vomiting due to nervousness. This remedy has a reputation as a normalizer of menstrual function and also as a mild expectorant.

Description: This herb is found growing wild throughout Europe. It is cultivated in Britain.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day or as needed.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: For the relief of nausea and vomiting it may be combined with Meadowsweet, Peppermint and Chamomile or other aromatics.

Black Mushroom

Name: Shiitake.

Biological Name: Lentinula edodes.

Other Names: Shiitake, black mushroom, Hua gu, mushroom (shiitake).

Parts Used: Fruiting body.

Active Compounds

Shiitake contains proteins, fats, carbohydrates, soluble fiber, vitamins, and minerals. In addition, shiitake's key ingredient—found in the fruiting body—is a polysaccharide called lentinan. Commercial preparations employ the powdered mycelium of the mushroom before the cap and stem grow; this is called LEM (lentinan edodes mycelium extract). LEM is also rich in polysaccharides and lignans.

History

The Chinese have always regarded the mushroom as having special properties. Mushrooms are regarded as "spirit medicine' because they are believed to nourish the shen, or spirit. As such, they are considered particularly important in vegetarian diets and regarded as a medicinal food that promotes longevity. Various medicinal mushrooms are used by the Chinese, but the most common is the shiitake, called the black mushroom (Lentinula edodes). While it was once available only by wild harvest, it has come to be the second most commonly grown mushroom in the world.

Shiitake has been revered in Japan and China as both a food and medicinal herb for thousands of years. Wu Ri, a famous physician from the Chinese Ming Dynasty (A.D. 1368–1644), wrote extensively about

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this mushroom, noting its ability to increase energy, cure colds, and eliminate worms.

Remedies For

Shiitake is useful for

—chemotherapy support

—hepatitis

—HIV support

Recent research has substantiated the immense therapeutic properties of shiitake: anti-tumor, immune-regulating, antiviral, antibacterial, antiparasitic, and anti-cholesterol. Shiitake mushrooms have been found to be particularly valuable for treating all forms of hepatitis, including hepatitis B and C. The lentinan in shiitake mushrooms has been found to be powerfully antiviral, with the ability to increase helper T-cell and low lymphocyte counts in human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)-positive individuals.

Research indicates that LEM helps decrease chronic hepatitis B infectivity, as measured by specific liver and blood markers. A highly purified intravenous form of lentinan has been employed in Japan for the treatment of recurrent stomach cancer, which increases survival with this cancer (particularly when used in combination with chemotherapy).

These effects may be due to shiitake's ability to stimulate specific types of white blood cells called T-lymphocytes. Case reports from Japan are also highly suggestive that lentinan is helpful in treating individuals with HIV infection.

However, large-scale clinical trials have not yet been performed confirming this action. According to herbalist Christopher Hobbs, "eritadenine, isolated from shiitake, has been shown to lower blood levels of cholesterol and lipids . . . Added to the diet of rats, eritadenine (0.005%) caused a 25% decrease in total cholesterol in as little as one week."

Description

Wild shiitake mushrooms are native to Japan, China, and other Asian countries and typically grow on fallen broadleaf trees. Shiitake is widely cultivated throughout the world, including the United States. The fruiting body is used medicinally.

Dosage

The traditional intake of the whole, dried shiitake mushroom, in soups or as a decoction, is 6–16 grams per day. For LEM, the intake is 1–3 grams two to three times per day until the condition being treated improves. As LEM is the more concentrated and hence more potent extract, it is preferred over the crude mushroom. Tincture, in the amount of 2–4 mL per day, can also be used.

Safety

Shiitake has an excellent record of safety but has been known to induce temporary diarrhea and abdominal bloating when used in high dosages. Its safety during pregnancy has not yet been established. We recommend that you consult your physician before taking this herb.

BLACK MUSTARD

Name: Mustard.

Biological Name: Brassica alba, Brassica nigra, Sinapsis alba Cruciferae.

Other Names: Mustard, Black Mustard, White Mustard, yellow mustard, kedlock, yellow mustard seed, white mustard seed.

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Parts Used: The Seeds.

Active Compounds

Glucosinolates; Black Mustard contains sinigrin, which on hydrolysis by the enzyme myrosin produces allyisothiocyanate, and White Mustard sinalbin, which produces p-hydroxybenzyl isothiocyanate.

Miscellaneous: Sinapine, sinapic acid, fixed oil, protein, mucilage etc.

Remedies For

Rubefacient, irritant, stimulant, diuretic, emetic., pungent, laxative, digestive.

This well known spice has its use in medicine as a stimulating external application. The rubefacient action causes a mild irritation to the skin, stimulating the circulation in that area and relieving muscular and skeletal pain.

Its stimulating, diaphoretic action can be utilized in the way that Cayenne and Ginger are. For feverishness, colds, and influenza, Mustard may be taken as a tea or ground and sprinkled into a bath.

The stimulation of circulation will aid chilblains as well as the conditions already mentioned. An infusion or poultice of Mustard will aid in cases of bronchitis.

Dosage

Poultice: Mustard is most commonly used as a poultice which can be made by mixing 100 grams (4 ounces) of freshly ground mustard seeds with warm water (at about 45°C) to form a thick paste.

This is spread on a piece of cloth the size of the body area that is to be covered. To stop the paste sticking to the skin, lay a dampened gauze on the skin. Apply the cloth and remove after 1 minute. The skin may be reddened by this treatment which can be eased by applying olive oil afterward.

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1 teaspoonful of mustard flour and leave to infuse for 5 minutes. This may be drunk three times a day.

Foot bath: Make an infusion using 1 tablespoon of bruised seeds to 1 litre (2 pints) of boiling water.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Black Nightshade

Name: Black Nightshade.

Biological Name: Solanum nigrum, Solanum rubrum, Solanum incertum.

Other Names: Garden Nightshade, Makoy, Kakamachi, Black nightshade, deadly nightshade, poisonberry Manal thakkali.

Description

This herb is found throughout India, US, Southern Canada and many parts of the world. Its erect, angular, branching stem grows 1 to 2 feet high and may be glabrous or covered with inward-bent hairs.

The leaves are alternate, dark green, ovate, and wavy-toothed or nearly entire. Drooping, lateral, umbel-like clusters of white or pale violet flowers appear from July to October. The fruit is a many-seeded, pea-sized, purple or black berry.

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Parts Used: Fruit, leaf.

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES

Action

Leaf: Alternative, sedative, diaphoretic, diuretic, hydragogue, expectorant.

Fruit: Alterative, tonic, diuretic

Uses

—edema
—fever and cough
—gonorrhea
—heart disease (accompanied by leg and foot swelling)
—hemorrhoids
—inflammatory swellings
—enlarged liver
—skin diseases
—enlarged spleen
—painful, swollen testicles

Taken internally in very small amounts, the leaves strongly promote perspiration and purge the bowels the next day. The juice of the fresh herb is sometimes used for fever and to allay pain. In large doses, black nightshade can cause serious, but usually not fatal, poisoning. Externally, the juice or an ointment prepared from the leaves can be used for skin problems and tumors.

The berries are poisonous, but boiling apparently destroys the toxic substances and makes them usable for preserves, jams, and pies.

This herb is used for skin diseases, rheumatism, and gout. Juice of the herb is given in chronic enlargement of the liver. It can cure ear, and eye diseases. It is sometimes prescribed to "remove the effect of old age."

Dosage

Powder, extract, leaves, poultice, syrup, decoction.

Safety

CAUTION: BERRIES MAY BE POISONOUS FOR SOME PEOPLE. IN LARGE DOSES, BLACK NIGHTSHADE CAN CAUSE SERIOUS, BUT USUALLY NOT FATAL, POISONING.

Do not take this herb internally except under the supervision of a qualified professional.

NOT RECOMMENDED.

BLACK PEPPER

Name: Black Pepper.

Biological Name: Piper nigrum Piperaceae.

Other Names: Black pepper, pepper, white pepper, green peppercorns, Maricha, Gulmirch, Kurumulaku, Nellamulaku.

Parts Used: Fruit.

Active Compounds

Black pepper's aromatic, slightly musty odor comes from the volatile oils found largely in the flesh and skin; its pungent bite comes from the alkaloids-piperine and piperidine- and resins found mostly in the seeds. The oils go into perfumes and flavorings.

History

No plant since the apple of Eden has had a larger, more telling effect on human history than the black pepper vine. Beginning in 327 B.C., when Alexander the Great invaded India and discovered the pleasures of well-seasoned food, wars have been fought, kingdoms over-thrown, unknown oceans braved, and continents discovered-all for the sake of peppercorns.

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Attila the Hun, holding all of Rome hostage, demanded 3,000 pounds of them as tribute. Throughout medieval Europe, pepper was commonly traded, ounce for ounce, for gold.

In 1488, in search of a water route to the spice markets of India, Bartholomeu Dias first sailed the raging waters around Africa's Cape of Good Hope. Four years later, looking for an easier route to the same markets, Columbus landed in the New World.

In the centuries that followed, European nations vied viciously with each other in colonizing tropical lands and trying to comer the spice market.

Description

The black pepper is produced by a woody, broad-leaved evergreen vine that is cultivated today in many tropical lands, from India, Indonesia, and Malaysia to South America and the West Indies. The stout vine, which is allowed to climb poles or small trees in cultivation, bears many slender, densely packed flower spikes. The fruits that develop upon these spikes are generally harvested while still green; the signal is the reddening of the lowest fruits on a spike. The green fruits are dried until the flesh around the single hard seed is wrinkled and grayish black, then ground into black pepper or packaged and sold as whole peppercorns. The milder white pepper is made from the same plant; but the fruits are allowed to ripen, and the flesh is removed before the seeds are ground.

MEDICINAL USES

Action

—anthelmintic, antipyretic, antiperiodic, carminative, expectorant, stimulant. —Externally-resolvent, rubefacient, stimulant

Uses

—asthma
—boils
—cholera
—colic
—cough
—diarrhea
—fever
—gas
—gastric ailments
—hemorrhoids
—indigestion
—chronic rheumatism
—obesity
—plegm
—sinus congestion
—skin diseases
—sore throat
—worms

Pepper has long been recognized as an ingredient for stimulating the appetite as well as an aid in the relief of nausea. In India it had been used as a medicine for variety of ailments from paralysis to toothache. East Africans are believe that body odor produced after eating substantial amounts of pepper repels mosquitoes.

A Philippine folk remedy calls for a a generous pinch of black pepper and an equivalent amount of anise to be combined to 1 cup of brandy.

Warm it over low heat (Do not boil.). Slowly sip small amount of this while still warm. Retain in the mouth for 45 seconds before

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swallowing. This helps to reduce elevated body temperature due to fever.

Black pepper is used in liniments and gargles; they have been used as carminatives, reducing stomach and intestinal gas; and they have been found to stimulate the activity of the heart and kidneys. It is also an effective insecticide against houseflies. Gardeners use pepper sprays against several kinds of pests. For toothache.

Make a decoction of the pepper by adding 1/8 teaspoon of black pepper to 1/2 cup boiling water. Stir, cover and simmer on low heat for 7 minutes. Steep, still covered for another 15 minutes. For toothache, rinse the mouth with small sips with warm decoction. Retain the liquid in the mouth for a minute or more. Repeat as needed.

Safety

CAUTION: MAY CAUSE DIGESTIVE INFLAMMATIONS.

BLACK SAMPSON

Name: Echinacea.

Biological Name: Echinacea purpurea, Echinacea angustifolia.

Other Names: Narrow-leaved purple coneflower, Sampson root, Black Sampson, Red sunflower, Echinacea.

Parts Used: Roots.

Active Compounds

Echinacea supports the immune system. Several constituents in echinacea team together to increase the production and activity of white blood cells, lymphocytes, and macrophages. Echinacea also increases reduction of interferon, an important part of the body's response to viral infections such as colds and flu.

History

Echinacea was used by American Indians for a variety of conditions, including venomous bites and other external wounds. It was introduced into US. medical practice in 1887 and was touted for use in conditions ranging from colds to syphilis. Modern research started in the 1930s in Germany.

Traditionally echinacea has been used for blood poisoning, fevers, carbuncles, acne, eczema, boils, peritonitis, syphilis conditions, bites and stings of poisonous insects or snakes, erysipelas, gangrenous conditions, diphtheria, tonsillitis, sores, infections and wounds.

Remedies For

Alterative, antiseptic, tonic, depurative, maturating, febrifuge.

Echinacea is used for

—Canker sores (mouth ulcers)

—Common cold/sore throat

—Crohn's disease

—Gingivitis (periodontal disease)

—Immune function

—Influenza (flu)

—Recurrent ear infection

—Yeast infection

Echinacea had been used to treat infections. There are some anecdotal reports of using echinacea for AIDS, more research need to be done in that area before any conclusions can be reached. Infections: Echinacea enhances the body's immune system. It has been shown effective for treating conditions such as influenza, colds, upper respiratory

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tract infections, urogenital infections, and other infectious conditions.

Common Cold: Echinacea is very popular for the treatment of common cold. Echinacea has been found effective in getting people back to health quickly as well as delaying getting other infections. Patients with weakened immune system have been found to be the most benefited from this herb.

Snake Bite: Echinacea had been used by American Indians as a remedy for snakebites. Echinacea is believed to inhibit hyaluronidase, a component of snake venom.

Wound Healing: Echinacea was found effective for the treatment of inflammatory skin conditions such as abscesses, foliculitis, wounds of all kinds, eczema, burns, herpes, and varicose ulcers of the leg.

Arthritis: Echinacea's anti-inflammatory activity helps alleviate rheumatoid arthritis.

Cancer: Echinacea is used to offset the depression of white cells during radiation and chemotherapy for cancer patients. Many clinical tests have shown that echinacea stabilized the white blood cells in patients undergoing cancer treatment, whereas, the patients not receiving echinacea had shown a continued decline in the white blood cells.

Description

Echinacea is a wildflower native to North America. While echinacea continues to grow and is harvested from the wild, the majority of that used for herbal supplements is from cultivated plants. The root or aboveground part of the plant during the flowering growth phase is used medicinally. The stout, bristly stem bears hairy, linear-lanceolate leaves, tapering at both ends, the lower on long petioles, the upper sessile. The distinctive flower features 12 to 20 large, spreading, dull-purple rays and a conical disk made up of numerous purple, tubular florets. Flowering time is June to October.

Dosage

As an immune system stimulant, echinacea is best taken for a specific period of time. At the onset of a cold, it can be taken three to four times per day for ten to fourteen days. To prevent a cold, many people take echinacea tablets or capsules three times per day for six to eight weeks. A "rest" period is recommended after this, as echinacea's effects may diminish if used longer. If preferred, powdered echinacea, in about 900 mg amounts, can be taken.

Liquid extracts are typically taken as 3–4 ml, three times per day.

Dried Root: (or as tea): 1–2 grams.

Freeze Dried Plant: 325–650 Milligrams.

Safety

Echinacea is essentially nontoxic when taken orally. People should not take echinacea without consulting a physician if they have an autoimmune illness, such as lupus, or other progressive diseases, such as tuberculosis or multiple sclerosis. Those who are allergic to flowers of the daisy family should take echinacea with caution. There are no known contra-indications to the use of echinacea during pregnancy or lactation.

Black Soybean

Name: Soy.

Biological Name: Sojae praeparatum Leguminosae.

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Other Names: Soy, Black soybean, Dan dou chi, fermented black soybean.

Parts Used: Beans, oil, sauce, and a variety of other forms.

Active Compounds

Soy, a staple food in many Asian countries, contains valuable constituents, including protein, isoflavones, saponins, and phytosterols. Soy protein provides most of the essential amino acids. It's also low in fat and cholesterol-free.

The isoflavones in soy, primarily genistein and daidzein, have been well researched by scientists for their antioxidant and phytoestrogenic properties.

Saponins enhance immune function and bind to cholesterol to limit its absorption in the intestine. Phytosterols and other components of soy have been reported to lower cholesterol levels.

Isoflavones may reduce the risk of hormone-dependent cancers, such as breast and prostate cancer, as well as other cancers. Both animal and human studies have confirmed this.

History

Ancient Chinese books have many references to the use of soy products. The predecessor of miso probably originated in China as a salt-fermented food called Chiang sometime during the Chou dynasty (722–481 B.C.). At first, the term referred to any protein-rich animal food that was preserved with salt.

The substitution of soybeans for meat and fish as the basic protein of chiang was first described in the Chimin Yaushu (535–550 A.D.) which is the oldest agricultural encyclopedia in the world. From the book's description, it appears that fermented soybean foods had been prepared several centuries before.

The cultivation of soybeans occurred with the spread of Buddhism, which recommended vegetarianism, during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–220 A.D.). It was also around 164 B.C that Lord Liu An of Huai-nan invented the process of making tofu.

Miso probably arrived in Japan either directly from China or from Korea around the same time as the introduction of Buddhism, sometime around the sixth century A.D Since that time, Miso has become a characteristic staple of the Japanese diet.

Today, it is made in various ways, distinguished by the local districts in Japan in which it is made. Whatever else is added, all Japanese miso varieties contain fermented soybeans. Miso is one of the most perfect foods.

First, because of the fermented soybeans, it is rich in easily assimilated high-quality protein. Second, it is commonly taken before or during Japanese meals because it aids the assimilation of other foods. This is because unpasteurized miso contains natural digestive enzymes, lactic acid bacteria (lactobacillus), salt-resistant yeasts, and healthful organisms found in the ingredients used to make miso.

The best-quality miso is fermented over several years. This supports the breakdown of complex carbohydrates, proteins, and fats into smaller molecules in the large and small intestines. Because enzymes and lactobacilli are live organisms, they die at temperatures over 104°F.

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This means that they are present in only unpasteurized miso. It also means that miso should never be boiled, rather, the paste should be stirred into the basic broth toward the conclusion of cooking, ideally when the temperature of the liquid is below 104 degrees.

Remedies For

Weak diaphoretic, calmative.

Soy is useful For

—cancer risk reduction
—high cholesterol
—menopause
—vaginitis

Soy and Reduction in Cholesterol: A meta-analysis study that pooled thirty-eight trials for reanalysis reported that a soy diet led to cholesterol reductions in 89% of the studies. Increasing soy intake was associated with a 23 mg per deciliter drop in total cholesterol levels.

Soy Beans and Breast Cancer: Eating lots of beans may help protect you from breast cancer, possibly because they contain so-called phytoestrogens that help block the activity of cancer-promoting estrogen. Hispanic women in the Caribbean and Mexico are known to have less breast cancer than American women. One reason could be that Hispanic women eat twice as many beans-mainly pinto, garbanzo and black beans-as American women. Hispanic women average three-fourths of a cup of beans six days a week. That's compared with beans three times a week for African-American women and twice a week for white American women. Beans also possess several anticancer compounds, including protease inhibitors and phytates.

Soybeans contain compounds that can manipulate estrogen as well as directly inhibit the growth of cancerous cells, theoretically reducing the risk of breast cancer in women of all ages. One soybean compound, in fact, is quite similar chemically to the drug tamoxifen, given to certain women to help prevent breast cancer and its spread.

Animal studies have shown that the soybean's phytoestrogens counteract cancer-promoting estrogen much the same way tamoxifen does. Researchers believe that soybean's most active anticancer agent is genistein. This was found to prevent breast tumors in animals. Human studies are in progress. Soybeans seem to protect Asian women against breast cancer. A recent study found that premenopausal women in Singapore who ate twice as much soy protein as most people had only half the risk of breast cancer.

Soybeans are regarded as the likely primary reason Japanese women have less breast cancer. Researchers found that those who ate the most soybean foods had the highest urine concentrations of isoflavonoids, which are anti-cancer agents, particularly against. breast cancer and prostate cancer. Typically the women ate three ounces of soybean products a day, including tofu (soybean curd), miso (soybean paste), fermented soybeans and boiled soybeans. Eating miso has also decreased both the occurrence and growth of breast tumors in animals. This jibes with the observation that postmenopausal breast cancers grow more slowly in Japanese women than in Caucasian women.

Soy and Stomach Cancer: Soybeans may help. fight off stomach cancer. Japanese scientists

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found that men and women who ate a bowl of rniso soup a day were only one-third as apt to develop stomach cancer as those who never ate it. Even eating it occasionally cut the odds of stomach cancer by 17 percent in men and 19 percent in women.

NOTE: Only soybean protein appears protective. That includes soybeans, textured soy protein, soy milk, tofu, miso and tempeh, but not soy sauce or soybean oil.

Soy and Menaupaual Symptoms: The mild estrogen activity of soy isoflavones may ease menopause symptoms for some women, without creating estrogen-related problems. A group of fifty-eight menopausal women, who experienced an average of fourteen hot flashes per week, supplemented their diets with either wheat flour or soy flour every day for three months; the women taking the soy reduced their hot flashes by 40%. In addition, soy may help regulate hormone levels in premenopausal women.

Miso and Vegetarians: Vegetarians who exclude all animal protein and dairy can become deficient in vitamin B12. The bacteria in naturally fermented miso have been found to manufacture vitamin B12, making miso paste an important vegetarian food. Japanese monks, who are well known for their vitality and long life and eat no animal products, regularly consume miso.

Improves Digestion: Miso is used to relieve acid indigestion, symptoms of hangover, and other digestive upsets. Because of this, it is used with ginger and/or garlic to prevent and/or cure colds, improve digestive metabolism, increase resistance to parasite infestations (which tend to occur in an acid environments), and neutralize blood toxins and therefore clear the skin.

Counteracts Pollution and Adverse Effects of Radiation: Miso was also found to counteract the adverse effects of radiotherapy, antibiotics, chemotherapy, and environmental pollution. By 1972, Dr. Akizuki, his nurses, and co-workers, whose hospital was located only 1 mile from the atomic bomb blast in Hiroshima in 1945, still had experienced no side effects from radiation exposure, despite the opposite experience of others in the near vicinity.

He attributed this to the fact that they regularly ate miso. Stimulated by Dr. Akizuki's claims, Japanese scientists conducted a study of miso and one of the ingredients used to make it, called natto.

They found a substance they called zybicolin, which is produced by the yeasts of these products. It has the special ability to attract, absorb, and discharge such radioactive elements as strontium. Miso is also able to detoxify the harmful influences of tobacco and traffic pollution.

Description

In addition to whole soy-beans, foods derived from soy include tofu, tempeh, soy milk, textured and hydrolyzed vegetable protein, meat substitutes, soy flour, miso, and soy sauce. Soy is also available as a supplement, as soy protein or isoflavone in powder, capsule, or tablet form. High levels of soy-based isoflavones are in roasted soy nuts, tofu, tempeh, soy milk, and some soy protein isolates.

Dosage

The ideal intake of soy is not known. The equivalent of one serving of soy foods per

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day is believed to support good health. The benefits increase as soy intake increases.

Safety

Mothers who are nursing should not use black soybean, as it may inhibit lactation.

Soy products and cooked soy beans are very safe at a wide range of consumption. A small percentage of people are allergic to soybeans and if you are one of the lucky ones, you should avoid consuming soy products.

Certain constituents in soy was found to interfere with thyroid function. It is not clear at this time what the significance of this is. Soy contains a compound called phytic acid which can interfere with mineral absorption.

Black Tany

Name: Bladderwrack.

Biological Name: Fucus vesiculosus Fucaceae.

Other Names: Kelp, Seawrack, Kelpware, Black-tang, Bladder Fucus, Cutweed, bladderwrack, sea weed, sea oak, black tany, cutweed.

Parts Used: The whole plant.

Active Compounds

Phenolic compounds, phloroglucinol, its dehydropolymerization products the fucols, the fucophorethols, phlorotannin derivatives.

—Mucopolysaccharides, algin.

—Sulphuryl-, sulphonyl- and phosphonyl-glycosyl ester diglycerides.

—Polar lipids

—Trace metals, particularly iodine.

Remedies For

Anti-hypothyroid, anti-rheumatic, alterative, diuretic. Bladderwrack has proved most useful in the treatment of underactive thyroid glands and goiter. Through the regulation of thyroid function there is an improvement in all the associated symptoms. Where obesity is associated with thyroid trouble, this herb may be very helpful in reducing the excess weight. It has a reputation in helping the relief of rheumatism and rheumatoid arthritis, both used internally and as an external application upon inflamed joints.

Kloss, author of "Back to Eden" describe the medicinal properties of bladderwrack thus: "The best remedy for obesity. Good for all glandular afflictions, goiter, and scrofula. Has an excellent effect on the kidneys."

Description: A seaweed common in colder waters.

Dosage

The herb may be taken in tablet form as a dietary supplement or as an infusion by pouring a cup of boiling water onto 2–3 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leaving it to steep for 10 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Black Walnut

Latin Name: Juglans nigra.

Other Names: Butternut, Lemon Walnut, Oilnut, White Walnut.

A Remedy For

—Hemorrhoids

—Liver and gallbladder problems

Although its use has not been officially recognized, Black Walnut is considered

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effective for the above problems. In homeopathic medicine, it's used to treat headache, hepatitis, and skin conditions.

What It Is; Why It Works

Native to the forests of the United States, the Black Walnut tree grows over 90 feet high. Its bark and its root are used medicinally. Juglone, a compound isolated from Black Walnut, fights bacteria and worms, shows anti-tumor activity, and serves as a gentle laxative.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Black Walnut.

Special Cautions

At customary dosage levels, Black Walnut poses no problems.

Possible Drug Interactions

No drug interactions have been recorded.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No information is available.

How to Prepare

No information is available.

Typical Dosage

Strengths of commercial preparations may vary. Follow the manufacturer's labeling whenever available.

Overdosage

If you suspect an overdose, seek medical attention immediately.

BLACKBERRY

Name: Blackberry.

Biological Name: Rubus villosus Rosaceae.

Other Names: Bramble, cloudberry, dewberry, goutberry, high blackberry, thimbleberry, blackberry.

Parts Used: The bark of the the root and rhizome.

Active Compounds

20% Tannin, gallic acid, saponins including villosin.

History

From the time of Christ the leaves of blackberry plant was chewed for bleeding gums. It had been used for diarrhea for a long time as a folk remedy. The ancient Greeks used blackberry to treat gout. (The herb is also known as "goutberry".) The ancient Chinese used the unripe berries to treat kidney problems, urinary incontinence, and impotence.

The Romans chewed the leaves for bleeding gums and drank a decoction for diarrhea. During the middle ages, the blackberry leaves were applied to the skin to soothe burns and scalds. Contemporary herbalist recommend it as an astringent for the treatment of diarrhea.

Remedies For

Astringent

Used for

—Diarrhea

—Wounds

—Mouth Sores, Sore Throat

—Hemorrhoids

Blackberry is an excellent, safe and gentle astringent remedy that can be used in all situations that call for this action. It may be used in diarrhea, dysentery and other

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problems associated with 'loose bowels'. It was traditionally used in Britain externally as wash in a whole range of skin eruptions and burns. It will staunch bleeding and may be used in leucorrhoea.

Blackberry leaves and roots are a popular home remedy for diarrhea. Herbalists believe that prolonged use of the tea is also beneficial for enteritis, chronic appendicitis, and leucorrhoea.

It is said to have expectorant properties as well. A tea made from the dried root can be used for dropsy.

One animal study has shown that a strong infusion of blackberry leaves reduces blood sugar levels in diabetic rabbits. It may also have beneficial effect in the treatment of menstrual cramps, although no proof of such claim exists.

Description

Blackberry is a trailing perennial plant that grows in dry or sandy soil in the northeastern and middle states of the U.S. and is cultivated elsewhere. The slender branches feature sharp, recurved prickles. The leaves are finely hairy with 3 to 5 leaflets. The leaflets are ovate and doubly serrate. The white, five-petaled flowers appear from June to September. The berries turn red as they ripen and become a juicy, purplish blue black by midsummer.

Dosage

Decoction: Use 1 tsp. root or leaves to 1 cup water. Take 1 to 2 cups a day, cold.

Tincture (*of root*): Take 15 to 40 drops in water, as needed.

Safety

Some people believe that large amount of tannins, if consumed, may result in cancer, stomach distress, nausea and vomiting.

Blackberry root bark contains the most tannin followed by the leaves and finally the fruit. If you are suffering from chronic gastrointestinal conditions such as colitis, do not use blackberry roots.

Use blackberry in medicinal amounts and under the supervision of a qualified professional. If you experience nausea or vomiting, stop using it immediately and contact your doctor.

BLACKWORT

Name: Comfrey.

Biological Name: Symphytum officinale.

Boraginaceae.

Other Names: Comfrey, Knitbone, Blackwort, bruisewort, gum plant, healing herb, knitback, salsify, slippery root, wallwort.

Parts Used: Root and rhizome, leaf.

Active Compounds

Allantoin: Pyrrolizidine alkaloids, including echimidine, symphytine, lycopsamine, symlandine. The alkaloids are found in the fresh young leaves and in the root, but in two separate investigations were found to be absent in the dried herb.

Phenolic acids: Rosmarinic, chlorogenic, caffeic and lithospermic acids.

Mucilage, about 29%, composed of a polysaccharide containing glucose & fructose.

Miscellaneous: choline, asparagine, volatile oil, tannins, steroidal saponins, triterpenes.

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Remedies For

Actions: Vulnerary, demulcent, anti-inflammatory, astringent, expectorant.

Comfrey is an excellent wound-healer. This is partially due to the presence of allantoin. This chemical stimulates cell proliferation and so augments wound-healing both inside and out.

The addition of much demulcent mucilage makes Comfrey a powerful healing agent in gastric and duodenal ulcers, hiatus hernia and ulcerative colitis. Its astringency will help hemorrhages wherever they occur.

It has been used with benefit in cases of bronchitis and irritable cough, where it will soothe and reduce irritation whilst helping expectoration. Comfrey may be used externally to speed wound-healing and guard against scar tissue developing incorrectly. Care should be taken with very deep wounds, however, as the external application of Comfrey can lead to tissue forming over the wound before it is healed deeper down, possibly leading to abscesses.

It may be used for any external ulcers, for wounds and fractures as a compress or poultice. It is excellent in chronic varicose ulcers. It has a reputed anti-cancer action.

Description

Comfrey is a perennial plant common in moist meadows and other moist places in the U.S. and Europe. The rootstock is black outside, fleshy and whitish inside, and contains a glutinous juice. The angular, hairy stem bears bristly, oblong lanceolate leaves, some petioled, some sessile. There are also tongue-shaped basal leaves that generally lie an the ground. The whitish or pale purple flowers have a tubular corolla resembling the finger of a glove and appear from May to August.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 1–3 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb in a cup of water, bring to the boil and let simmer for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 2–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Cold Extract Tea: Use 3 heaping tsp. fresh or dried rootstock with 1 cup water; let stand for 10 hours and strain. Bring the waked rootstock to a boil in 1/2 cup water, then strain. Mix this with the cold extract and drink a mouthful at a time over the course of the day.

Pulp: Stir fresh, chopped rootstock into a little hot water to form a thick mash. Spread on a linen cloth and apply. Renew every 2 to 4 hours.

Combinations: For gastric ulcers and inflammations it combines well with Marshmallow and Meadowsweet. For chest and bronchial troubles use it with Coltsfoot, White Horehound or Elecampane. For wound healing use with Calendula.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

BLADDERWRACK

Latin Name: Fucus vesiculosus.

Other Names: Black-tang, Cutweed, Kelpware, Quercus marina, Seawrack.

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A Remedy For

Bladderwrack has been used as a remedy for high cholesterol and hardening of the arteries, indigestion, excess weight, and insufficient thyroid, but its efficacy has not been scientifically verified.

What It Is; Why It Works

Bladderwrack is a type of seaweed supported by air bladders on the body of the plant. ("Fucus" is the Roman name for brown seaweed. "Vesiculosus" comes from the Latin "vesicula," meaning "little blisters.")

Most of the healing virtues of Bladderwrack seem to derive from its iodine content, which stimulates the thyroid gland. In the 19th century, Bladderwrack was used to promote weight loss by boosting thyroid activity.

Bladderwrack is often over a yard long. It is olive green when fresh and black/brown when dry. It is found on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and in the North Sea and the western Baltic.

Avoid If...

Because the amount of iodine in the plant is highly variable, its use is no longer recommended.

Special Cautions

High dosages of iodide (over 150 micrograms per day) can induce or worsen an overactive thyroid. Allergic reactions are also a possibility.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Not recommended.

Typical Dosage

Not recommended.

Overdosage

Warning signs of excessive thyroid stimulation include thyroid enlargement, rapid heartbeat, palpitations, nervousness, agitation, increased sweating, fatigue, weakness, insomnia, increased appetite, and weight loss.

BLOOD ROOT

Name: Blood Root.

Biological Name: Sanguinaria canadensis Papaveraceae.

Other Names: Red Root, Red Indian Paint, Tetterwort, Blood root, Indian paint, Indian plant, pauson, red paint root, red puccoon, red root, sanguinariat.

Parts Used: Dried rhizome.

Active Compounds

Isoquinoline alkaloids, including sanguinarine (~1%), chelerythrine, sanguidaridine, oxysanguinaridine, sanguilutine, berberine, coptisine, chelilutine, protopine, sanguidimerine, sanguirubine, a- and b-allocryptopine and others.

Remedies For

Expectorant, anti-spasmodic, emetic, cathartic, nervine, cardio-active, topical irritant.

Blood root is mainly used in the treatment of bronchitis. Whilst the stimulating properties show in its power as an emetic and expectorant, it demonstrates a relaxing

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action on the bronchial muscles. It thus has a role in the treatment of asthma, croup and also laryngitis. However, by far the most important contribution Sanguinaria has to make is in chronic congestive conditions of the lungs including chronic bronchitis, emphysema and bronchiectasis. It acts as a stimulant in cases of deficient peripheral circulation. It may be used as a snuff in the treatment of nasal polyps.

Description

Native of N. America and Canada, bloodroot is a small perennial plant, about 6 inches high, found in shaded, rich soils. The finger-thick rootstock contains a red juice when fresh; when dried it is yellow inside and brown outside. The leaves are basal, each coming from a bud on the rootstock; they are cordate or reniform in shape, palmately veined and lobed. It bears a white flower with 8 to 12 petals arranged in two or more whorls.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 1 teaspoonful of the rhizome in a cup of cold water, bring to the boil and leave to infuse for l0 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: Blood root is excellent when used in combination with Horehound and Elecampane for congestive complaints. In pharyngitis it combines well with Red Sage and a pinch of Cayenne.

Safety

Large doses are sedative and overdoses can be fatal.

DO NOT USE WITHOUT MEDICAL SUPERVISION. NOT RECOMMENDED.

BLOWBALL

Name: Dandelion.

Biological Name: Taraxacum officinale, Taraxaci mongolici Compositae.

Other Names: Blowball, cankerwort, lion's tooth, priest's crown, puffball, swine snout, white endive, wild endive, dandelion, Pu gong ying.

Parts Used: Leaves and root.

Active Compounds: The principal constituents responsible for dandelion's effect on the digestive system and liver are the bitter principles. Previously referred to as taraxacin, these constituents are sesquiterpene lactones of the eudesmanolide and germacranolide type and are unique to dandelion.

Dandelion is also a rich source of vitamins and minerals. The leaves have a very high content of vitamin A as well as moderate amounts of vitamin D, vitamin C, various B vitamins, iron, silicon, magnesium, zinc, and manganese.

The leaves are a rich source of potassium, which is interesting since the leaves are used for their diuretic action.

This may make dandelion the only naturally occurring potassium-sparing diuretic, although its diuretic action is likely different from that of pharmaceuticals.

At high doses, the leaves have been shown to possess diuretic effects comparable to the prescription diuretic frusemide (Lasix). Since clinical data in humans is sparse, it is advisable to seek the guidance of a physician

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trained in herbal medicine before using dandelion leaves for water retention.

The bitter compounds in the leaves and root help stimulate digestion and are mild laxatives. These bitter principles also increase bile production in the gallbladder and bile flow from the liver. This makes them a particularly useful tonic for persons with sluggish liver function due to alcohol abuse or poor diet. The increase in bile flow will help improve fat (including cholesterol) metabolism in the body.

History

Dandelion is commonly used as a food. The leaves are used in salads and teas, while the roots are often used as a coffee substitute.

Dandelion leaves and roots have been used for hundreds of years to treat liver, gallbladder, kidney, and joint problems. In some countries, dandelion is considered a blood purifier and is used for ailments such as eczema and cancer. Dandelion has also been used historically to treat poor digestion, water retention, and diseases of the liver, including hepatitis.

Remedies For

—Hepatic, aperient, diuretic, depurative, tonic, stomachic

—Dandelion is useful for a variety of purposes:

Leaves:

—Constipation

—Indigestion and heartburn

—Pregnancy support

Water retention

Root:

—Alcoholism

—Constipation

—Indigestion and heartburn

—Liver support

—Pregnancy support

Dandelion has two particularly important uses: to promote the formation of bile and to remove excess water from the body. The root affects all forms of secretion and excretion from the body. It acts as a tonic and stimulant by removing toxins and poisons from the body.

It increases the flow of urine in patients with liver problems. It is slightly laxative. It is a splendid remedy for jaundice and skin diseases, scurvy, scrofula, and eczema. Useful in all kinds of kidney troubles, diabetes, dropsy, inflammation of the bowels, and fever.

Has beneficial effect on the female organs. Increases the activity of the liver, pancreas, and spleen, especially in enlargement of the liver and the spleen.

Lukewarm dandelion tea is recommended for dyspepsia with constipation, fever, insomnia, and hypochondria. An infusion of the fresh root is reportedly good for gallstones, jaundice, and other liver problems.

Chinese Herbal Applications: Dandelion is used whenever there is liver involvement with heat and toxins in the blood. This includes jaundice, hepatitis, red and swollen eyes, as well as urinary tract infection, abscesses, or firm, hard sores in the breasts. It is also very effective to increase the production of mother's milk.

Description

Closely related to chicory, dandelion is a common perennial plant worldwide. The

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plant grows to a height of about 12 inches. The oblong or spatulate, irregularly dentate or pinnatified leaves grow in a rosette from the milky taproot, which also sends up one or more naked flower stems, each terminating in a single yellow flower.

The familiar puffball that succeeds the flower is a globular cluster of achenes, each of which is fitted with a parachute-like tuft. Dandelion is grown commercially in the United States and Europe. The leaves and root are used in herbal supplements.

Dosage

As a general liver/gallbladder tonic and to stimulate digestion, 3–5 grams of the dried root or 5–10 ml of a tincture made from the root can be used three times per day Some experts recommend the alcohol-based tincture because the bitter principles are more soluble in alcohol.

As a mild diuretic or appetite stimulant, 4–10 grams of dried leaves can be added to 250 ml (1 cup) of boiling water and drunk as a decoction; or 5–10 ml of fresh juice from the leaves or 2–5 ml of tincture made from the leaves can be used three times per day.

The fresh juice is the most effective.

For chronic rheumatism, gout, stiff joints follow an 8-week dandelion cure as follows:

Use the whole plant before it flowers, leaves during flowering and root only during fall.

Infusion: Steep 2 tsp. Plant or root in 1-cup boiling water. Take 1/2 to 1 cup a day, lukewarm or cold.

Decoction: Use 4 oz. Fresh plant with 2 pints of water; boil down gently to 1 pint and strain. Take 3 tbsp. Six times daily.

Cold Extract: Use 2 tsp. Plant with 1 cup water; let stand for 8-hours.

Juice: For a springtime tonic, take 1 tsp. Juice pressed from the leaves in milk, one to three times a day. Use an electric vegetable juicer to extract the milk.

Safety

Dandelion leaf and root should be used with caution by persons with gallstones. If there is an obstruction of the bile ducts, then dandelion should be avoided altogether.

In cases of stomach ulcer or gastritis, dandelion should be used cautiously, as it may cause overproduction of stomach acid.

Those experiencing fluid or water retention should consult a nutritionally oriented doctor before taking dandelion leaves. People taking the leaves should be sure that their doctors monitor potassium levels.

The milky latex in the stem and leaves of fresh dandelion may cause an allergic rash in some individuals.

Blue Flag

Name: Blue Flag.

Biological Name: Iris versicolor Iridaceae.

Other Names: Flag-lily, fleur-de-lis, flower-de-luce, iris, liver lily, poison flag, snake lily, water flag, wild iris, blue flag.

Parts Used: Rhizome.

Active Compounds: Volatile oil, containing furfural, Iridin (or irisin), a glycoside.

Acids such as salicylic and isophthalic

Miscellaneous: A monocyclic C31 triterpenoid, gum, resin, sterols, etc.

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History

Historically, this herb had been used as a cathartic, diuretic, sialagogue. Blue flag is said to be good for chronic vomiting, heartburn, chronic gastritis and enteritis, liver and gallbladder ailments, and catarrhal sinus problems. It is highly recommended for migraine, especially when caused by stomach disorders. The Indians also used blue flag for dropsy. The bruised fresh leaves are also sometimes used externally for burns and sores.

Remedies For

Cholagogue, hepatic, alterative, laxative, diuretic, anti-inflammatory. This herb is used in the treatment of skin diseases, apparently aiding the skin by working through the liver, the main detoxifying organ of the body. It may be used in skin eruptions such as eczema and psoriasis. It is valuable as part of a wider treatment. It may be used with value where there is constipation associated with liver problems or biliousness.

Description

Blue flag is a wetlands perennial plant native to eastern North America and exported from here to Europe. Its stout stem grows from a thick, cylindrical, creeping rootstock and bears two ranks of sword shaped long, narrow leaves. Each stem has 2 or 3 large, blue or purplish flowers featuring three petal-like, spreading or recurved sepals below and three petals, smaller than the sepals, above.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 1 teaspoonful of the dried herb into a cup of water and bring to the boil. Let it simmer for 10–15 minutes. Take this three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: Blue Flag combines well with Echinacea or Burdock and Yellow Dock.

Safety

CAUTION: BLUE FLAG CONTAINS AN ACRID, RESINOUS SUBSTANCE THAT ACTS ON THE GASTRO-INTESTINAL TRACT, THE LIVER, AND THE PANCREAS. IT MAY ALSO CAUSE DERMATITIS IN SOME PEOPLE.

Blue Gum

Name: Eucalyptus.

Biological Name: Eucalyptus globulus Myrtaceae.

Other Names: Eucalyptus, blue gum.

Parts Used: Leaves, oil.

Active Compounds

Volatile oil, the major component of which is 1,8-cineole (=eucalyptol), 70–85%; with terpineole, a-pinene, p-cymene and small amounts of sesquiterpenes such as ledol, aromadendrene and viridoflorol; aldehydes, ketones and alcohols.

—Polyphenolic acids; caffeic, ferulic, gallic, protocatechuic and others.

—Flavonoids including eucalyptin, hyperoside and rutin.

History

King's American Dispensatory describes the historic uses this plant thus:

Eucalyptus globulus has for a long time been known as a remedy for intermittent fever among the natives of the countries of its origin. Aside from its alleged utility

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in intermittents, this agent has had other virtues attributed to it, as follows:

The leaves and their preparations have been successfully used as a tonic and gently stimulating stomachic, in atonic dyspepsia, and in catarrh of the stomach and typhoid fever; also advised in mucous catarrhal affections generally; in pseudo-membranous laryngitis, in asthma, with profuse secretion, and in chronic bronchitis, with or without emphysema, and in whooping-cough; it has likewise proved efficient in chronic catarrh of the bladder, where the urine is high-colored, contains an abnormal amount of mucus, or, perhaps, some purulent matter, and micturation is attended with much pain.

More recently it has been recommended as a diuretic in the treatment of dropsy. Both the leaves and the oil are excitants and deodorizers, and, as such, have been successfully employed as local applications in bronchial affections with fetid expectoration, in ozena, in fetid or profuse mucous discharges, in vaginal leucorrhoea, offensive lochial discharges, gonorrhoeal discharges, indolent, fetid wounds or ulcers, cancerous ulcerations, in septicemia, and in gangrene.

The leaves may, in some cases, be applied alone, directly to the part, in form of cataplasm; or they may be combined with other articles to form a poultice. The oil may be applied of full strength, or diluted with some other agent.

In throat and pulmonary maladies, a tincture diluted, or a medicated water, may be inhaled in the form of spray; if the oil be employed, it may be dropped on some cotton placed in a small tube, from which the vapor may be inhaled.

As a deodorizer, the tincture or the oil may be sprinkled or sprayed upon the offensive body, or the atmosphere of an apartment may be frequently sprayed with the same.

Externally applied, the oil gives relief in some forms of neuralgic and rheumatic pains.

The leaves of Eucalyptus, made up into cigars or cigarettes, and smoked, have been advised to afford relief in bronchial catarrh, asthma, and other affections of the respiratory organs. The question has been asked, may not the small amount of benefit that might be derived from the minute proportion of oil remaining intact, be more than overcome, and even prove injurious, from the irritating action of the smoke and of the empyreumatic products. Eucalyptus honey, gathered by bees from Eucalyptus flowers, is quite active, and has been recommended for parasitic and putrescent conditions, gonorrhea, fevers, and catarrhal diseases. It is sedative to the heart, actively diuretic, and increases the elimination of uric acid.

Remedies For

Antiseptic, deodorant, expectorant, stimulant, anti-microbial, anti-spasmodic, febrifuge.

Most eucalyptus medications are made from the greenish-yellow oil obtained from the mature leaves. The oil, or lozenges and cough drops made from it is useful for lung diseases, colds, and sore throat. It can also be used as a vapor bath for asthma and other respiratory ailments, and as an antiseptic bath additive. Its expectorant properties are useful for bronchitis. The oil is also said to be useful for pyorrhea and for burns, to prevent infection. A cold exact made from the leaves is helpful for Indigestion and for

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intermittent fever. Externally, the antiseptic and deodorant qualities of the oil make it suitable for use on wounds and ulcers.

Combinations: The oil is often combined with Thymus.

Description

Eucalyptus is a tall, evergreen tree native to Australia and Tasmania. Among its various species, the blue gum is the one commonly grown in the U.S. The trunk, which grows to 300 feet high or more, is covered with peeling papery bark.

The leaves on the young plant, up to 5 years old, are opposite, sessile, soft, oblong, pointed, and a hoary blue color. The mature leaves are alternate, petioled, leathery, and shaped like a scimitar.

The flowers are solitary, axillary, and white, with no petals and a woody calyx. The fruit is a hard, four-celled, many-seeded capsule enclosed in the calyx cup.

Dosage

Boil mature leaves In water and condense the vapor to recover the oil.

An infusion may be made with 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the leaves to a cup of boiling water. Let infuse for 10–15 minutes. The dose of tincture is 1 ml. three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Blue Mallow

Latin Name: Malva sylvestris.

Other Names: Cheeseflower, Mallow, Mauls.

A Remedy For

—Bronchitis

—Cough

In folk medicine, Blue Mallow has also been used for stomach inflammation, bladder problems, and wounds. It has been proven effective, however, only for upper respiratory irritation.

What It Is; Why It Works

Blue Mallow is found in subtropical and temperate latitudes all over the world. A leafy plant growing up to 4 feet in height, it produces bright purple flowers with long dark stripes.

Blue Mallow soothes irritated membranes by coating them with a smooth, syrupy material. The leaves and flowers are both used medicinally—but only when the more effective Marshmallow is unavailable.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Blue Mallow.

Special Cautions

At customary dosage levels, Blue Mallow causes no problems.

Possible Drug Interactions

No drug interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

To make tea from Blue Mallow flower, add 1.5 to 2 grams of crushed flowers to cold water and boil. Strain after 10 minutes.

For a tea from the plant's leaves, pour about

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two-thirds of a cup of boiling water over 3 to 5 grams (about 2 teaspoonfuls) of the herb and steep for 2 to 3 hours, stirring occasionally.

Typical Dosage

The usual dosage of both the flower and the leaf is 5 grams daily.

Blue-Green Algae

Name: Spirulina.

Biological Name: Spirulina maxima, Spirulina platensis.

Other Names: Spirulina, Blue-green algae.

Active Compounds

Spirulina is particularly rich in protein, containing all of the essential amino acids.

Spirulina also contains carotenoids, vitamins, minerals, and essential fatty acids.

Remedies For

Spirula may help in

—weight loss and obesity

There are no scientific studies attesting to the efficacy of this herb. Individuals who do not consume several servings of vegetables per day could benefit from the carotenoids and other nutrients in spirulina. Since it is a complete protein, it can be used in place of some of the protein in a healthy diet.

Description

Spirulina, or blue-green algae, belongs to a group of 1,500 species of microscopic aquatic plants. The two most common species used for human consumption are Spirulina maxima and Spirulina platensis.

Spirulina grows in some lakes, particularly those rich in salts, in Central and South America and Africa. It is also grown in outdoor tanks specifically to be harvested for nutritional supplements.

Dosage

Can be taken as a powder, flakes, capsules, or tablets.

2,000–3,000 mg per day divided throughout the day.

Safety

There are no side effects reported with spirulina. However, since spirulina can accumulate heavy metals from contaminated water, consuming spirulina from such areas can increase the body's load of lead, mercury, and cadmium.

Few people have developed allergic reaction when consuming this herb. If you develop any adverse reaction when consuming this herb, stop the consumption immediately and check with your doctor.

Bohe

Name: Mint.

Biological Name: Menthae haplocalycis Labiatae.

Other Names: Mint, Chinese mint, Bo he.

Parts Used: Leaves.

Remedies For

Diaphoretic, antipyretic, stomachic, carminative.

Diaphoretic: Clears wind-heat conditions associated with colds and influenza with fever, headache, sore throat, and red eyes (conjunctivitis). It can also be used for measles and rashes. Like peppermint, it is very good for stomach bloating and lifting

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the spirits. Finally, it can be used for mouth sores, toothache, allergic rashes, hives, and the early stages of measles.

Dosage

3–6 grams.

Safety

Mint should be used with caution by those with weakness and spontaneous sweating. This herb should not be used by nursing mothers, as it may slow lactation.

BOBEA

Name: Red root.

Biological Name: Ceanothus americanus.

Other Names: New Jersey Tea, Jersey tea, mountain-sweet, red root, Walpole tea, wild snowball, wild snowball, New Jersey Tea Tree, bobea.

Parts Used: Bark of the root.

Remedies For

Astringent, expectorant, sedative.

New Jersey tea root-bark has been recommended for various chest problems, including chronic bronchitis, nervous asthma, whooping cough, and consumption. It has also been used as a gargle for inflammations and irritations in the mouth and throat, particularly for swollen tonsils. American Indians used a tea made from the whole plant for skin problems (including skin cancer and venereal sores). The tea may help raise a patient's spirits when despondency sets in during illness.

Historically it was believed that gargling with a strong tea every two hours will reduce sore, swollen tonsils. If tonsils are very sore and swollen, make a swab and work around good and then gargle. It will reduce very badly enlarged tonsils, and the trouble will rarely recur. It is also believed to be useful for spleen problems.

In combination with fringe tree and golden seal, it is good for sick headache, acute indigestion, and nausea due to the poor activity of the liver.

Traditionally, this was prescribed as a remedy for diabetes, asthma, bronchitis, and other lung infections.

Description

New Jersey tea is a small, deciduous shrub common in dry woods at low elevations all across the U.S. The large root is red inside and is covered with brownish or reddish bark. The round, slender, reddish stems bear alternate, ovate or oblong-ovate, finely serrate leaves which are dull green on top and finely hairy beneath. Small white flowers grow in long-stalked clusters which form large panicles at the ends of the branches from June to August.

Dosage

Infusion: Steep 1 tsp. root-bark in 1 cup water. Take 1 to 2 cups a day.

Tincture: Take 10 to 20 drops in water, three or four times a day.

BOFAREIRA

Name: Castor Oil Plant.

Biological Name: Ricinus communis, Ricinus dicoccus Euphorbiaceae.

Other Names: Castor Oil Plant, Eranda, Vatari, Rendi, Bofareira, castor-oil plant, Mexico seed, oil plant, palma Christi

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Amanakkam-chedi, Amanakku, Amidamu, Amudam, Arand, Aranda, Audla, Avanakku, Ayrunkukri, Bedanjir, Bherenda, Chittavanakku, Chittamanakku, Chittmani, Diveli, Endaru, Endi, Eramudapu, Erand, Erendi, Erandthailam, Eri, Gandharva Haralu, hasthah, Gemeiner Wunderbaum, Heran, Kesusi, Khirva, Miniak-jarah, Panchangulam, Ricin, Ricinus, Sadabherenda, Verenda.

Description

The castor oil plant is cultivated widely in the tropics and subtropics and in temperate latitudes. Castor bean is an herbaceous annual plant that is found mostly cultivated in temperate climates, where it grows from 3 to 10 feet high. It is often grown in the northern U.S. as an ornamental plant.

The stout stem bears alternate, peltate, palmately lobed leaves that may be from 4 inches to 21/2 feet in diameter. A terminal raceme of flowers appears in later summer. The fruit is a spiny capsule which splits into three one-seeded parts. The seeds are smooth, glossy, black or mottled with gray or brown.

Parts Used: Oil, leaves, roots, seeds, fruit.

Constituents

—Fatty oil (42–55%)

—Proteins (20–25%)

—Lectins (0.1–0.7%): including among others ricin D (RCA-60. severely toxic), RCA-120 (less toxic)

—Pyridine alkaloids

—Triglycerides: chief fatty acids ricinoleic acid (12-hydroxy-oleic acid, share 85–90%)

—Tocopherols (Vitamin E)

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action

Cathartic, demulcent, analgesic, nervine, purgative.

Root Bark: Purgative.

The oil pressed out of the seeds is one of the most commonly used purgatives. Castor oil is described in Ayurveda as the "king of the purgatives" and "king of vayu disorders." Castor oil acids are anti-absorbative and hydragogic.

Ricini semen exhibits proven anti-viral effects.

Uses

—abdominal disorders

—colic

—enlarged liver and spleen

—fever

—headache

—lumbago

—nervous diseases

—pain relief (joints)

—promote menstrual discharge

—promote milk production

—rheumatism

—sciatica

Externally, the seeds and leaves of this herb are used in powder form as a poultice for inflammatory skin disorders, boils, carbuncles, abscesses, inflammation of the middle ear and migraine. Internally, the drug is used as a purgative in the treatment of acute constipation, intestinal inflammation, worms and as a form of birth control.

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C.K.N. Nair and N. Mohanan, authors of "Medicinal Plants of India," describe the application of this herb in Ayurveda as follows: "The oil, roots, seeds and leaves. Many medicinal uses. Root-bark, leaves and oil are purgatives. Oil used in rheumatism and many other medicinal preparations. Leaves are galactagogue. Decoction of root is a remedy in phlegm, swellings, stomach-aches, dropsy, fever, hernia, asthma, leprosy, rheumatic joints and all pains in the wrist, head and bladder. It cures rheumatism and stone in the bladder. Seeds ground and eaten cure rheumatism and liver complaints."

Dosage

Oil Doses: Children-1 tsp.; adults-2 tsp. - 3 tbs. in tea or boiled milk. Decoction, infusion, poultice, leaf, paste.

For Internal Use: Take at least 10.0 gm for acute constipation or as a purgative against worms.

For External Use: Use a paste made from ground seeds. Apply this paste to the affected skin areas twice daily. A course of treatment may take up to 15 days.

Safety

Caution: Do not use castor oil if you are suffering from kidney, bladder, bile duct, intestine infections or jaundice. Do not use if you are pregnant or nursing.

No health hazards or side effects are known if this herb is administered properly with designated therapeutic dosages of castor oil.

Castor beans are severely poisonous. The ricinus lectins prevent protein synthesis by destroying the ribosomes. Allergy-related skin rashes have been observed in some very few cases.

Long-term use of this herb can lead to losses of electrolytes, in particular K+-ions. This can result in hyperaldosteronism, inhibition of intestinal motility and enhancement of the effect of cardioactive steroids.

Do not administer this drug to children under 12 years of age.

Overdoses of this herb can lead to gastric irritation, accompanied by queasiness, vomiting, colic and severe diarrhea. Twelve castor beans are believed to be fatal for an adult. Symptoms include severe gastroenteritis, with bloody vomiting and bloody diarrhea, kidney inflammation, loss of fluid and electrolytes and ultimately circulatory collapse. Death is usually the result of hypovolemic shock.

CAUTION: THE ENTIRE PLANT, INCLUDING THE SEEDS, CONTAINS AN IRRITANT SUBSTANCE THAT POISONS THE BLOOD. THE OIL IS SAFE BECAUSE THE POISON REMAINS IN THE SEED.

Boldo

Name: Boldo.

Biological Name: Peumus boldo Monimiaceae.

Other Names: Boldu boldus Lyons, Boldea fragrans Gay, Boldo.

Parts Used: Dried leaves.

Active Compounds

Alkaloids, of the isoquinoline type, up to 0.75%, including boldine, isocorydine, N-methyllaurotetanine, norisocorydine.

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isoboldine, laurolitsine, reticuline & others.

Volatile oil, containing mainly p-cymene, l,8-cineole, ascaridole and linalool.

Flavonoid glycosides based on isorhamnetin.

Remedies For

Cholagogue, hepatic, diuretic.

Boldo is a specific for gall-bladder problems like stones or inflammations. It is also used when there is visceral pain due to other problems in liver or gall-bladder. Boldo has mild urinary demulcent and anti-septic properties and so would be used in cystitis.

Description: Boldo is indigenous to Chile. It was naturalized in mountainous parts of the Mediterranean.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1 teaspoonful of the dried leaves and let infuse 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: When treating gall-bladder or liver problems, it combines well with Fringetree Bark and Mountain Grape.

Bonmethi

Name: Nagabala.

Biological Name: Sida Spinosa, Sida alba, Sida alinifolia.

See Also: Sida cordifolia, Sida Rhombifolia.

Other Names: Bonmethi, Gorakchaulia, Gulsakari, Kadumenthys, Kantalo-bal, Khar-yashtika, Kattuvantiyam, Mayir-mamkkam, Pilabarela, Sham-lethe-dashti, Tukati-khareti.

Description: Nagabala is found throughout the hotter parts of India and Sri Lanka.

Parts Used: Leaves used in gleet and scalding urine. Root and root bark used in debility and fever.

Remedies For

Leaves are demulcent and refrigerant and are useful in gonorrhoea, gleet and scalding urine.

Decoction of the root-bark and root is used in mild cases of debility and fever.

Leaves are bruised in water, strained through cloth and administered in the form of a draught. Root is used in decoction.

Bookoo

Name: Buchu.

Biological Name: Barosma betulina Rutaceae.

Other Names: Bucco, Agathosma betulina, Buchu, Bookoo, Bucku, short leaved buchu, buku, bucco, round buchu.

Parts Used: Leaves.

Active Compounds

Volatile oil, diosphenol (=buchu camphor), pulegone, () and (-) isopulegone, 8-mercapto-p-menthan-3-one, responsible for the blackcurrant type odour; 8-acetylthiomenthone, piperitone epoxide ()-menthone, (-)-isomenthone, p-cymol, limonene, terpineol

Flavonoids; rutin, diosmin, hesperidin, quercitin and derivatives

Miscellaneous: Vitamins of the B group, tannin and mucilage.

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Remedies For

—Diuretic, urinary antiseptic.

—Buch is useful for the treatment of:

—Premenstrual Syndrome:

Buchu releives the bloating associated with PMS.

High Blood Pressure and Congenital Heart Failure: Consult your physician before using any herb for these conditions as these are life threatening cases.

Urinary Tract Infection: No proof exists for its effectiveness; but people continue to use it for infection.

Buchu may be used in any infection of the genito-urinary system, such as cystitis, urethritis and prostatitis. Its healing and soothing properties indicate its use together with other relevant remedies in many conditions of this system, especially useful where dysuria is part of the symptom picture. The oil content may be too irritating for people with a history of major kidney disease.

Buchu is described as one of the best remedies for the urinary organs. It is useful for treating pain while urinating, stoppage of the urine, inflammation of the bladder, or dropsy.

Description

Native of S. Africa. The leaves of this 5-foot shrub contain an oil that increases urine production. In 17th century, when Dutch colonists settled in S. Africa, they learned about the herb from the natives and adopted buchu for urinary tract infections, kidney stones, arthritis, cholera, and muscle aches. Later it had been used for so many ailments that medical botanists claim that it had been used for the treatment for "almost every disease which afflicts mankind."

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the leaves and let infuse for 10 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: In cystitis Buchu may be used in combination with Bearberry, Yarrow or Couchgrass, for dysuria with Corn Silk or Marshmallow.

Safety

Do not boil Buchu leaves.

Diuretics deplete body stores of potassium—an important nutrient. When taking Buchu, increase your consumption of potassium by consuming foods high in potassium such as bananas, fresh vegetables, etc.

Do not take this herb if you are pregnant without consulting your doctor.

FDA considers this herb as safe if taken as directed. No harmful effects have been reported.

If you experience stomach upset or diarrhea, stop taking the herb and consult your doctor.

BORAGE

Name: Borage.

Biological Name: Borago officinalis Boraginaceae.

Other Names: Bugloss, burrage, common bugloss, borage.

Parts Used: Leaves, flowers.

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Active Compounds

Pyrrolizidine alkaloids, including lycopsamine, intermedine and their acetyl derivatives, with amabiline and supinine.

Choline. Allantoin is reported to be absent

Remedies For

Diaphoretic, expectorant, tonic, anti-inflammatory, diuretic, galactogogue, nervine. Borage acts as a restorative agent on the adrenal cortex. In other words, borage will revive and renew the adrenal glands after a medical treatment with cortisone or steroids. There is a growing need for remedies that will aid this gland with the stress it is exposed to, both externally and internally.

Borage may be used as a tonic for the adrenals over a period of time. It may be used during fevers and especially during convalescence. It has a reputation as an anti-inflammatory herb used in conditions such as pleurisy. The leaves and seeds stimulate the flow or milk in nursing mothers. Borage contains potassium and calcium.

Description

Borage is an annual plant that grows wild in the Mediterranean countries and is cultivated elsewhere. The hollow, bristly, branched and spreading stem grows up to 2 feet tall. The leaves are bristly, oval or oblong-lanceolate, the basal ones forming a rosette and the others growing alternately on the stem and branches. The blue or purplish, star-shaped flowers grow in loose racemes from June to August.

Dosage

Infusion: Tour a cup of boiling water onto 2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

Prolonged use of borage is not advisable. No other information is available.

Boswellia

Name: Boswellia.

Biological Name: Boswellia serrata.

Other Names: Salai guggal, Boswellin, Indian. frankincense, Boswellia.

Parts Used: Gum resin.

Active Compounds

The gum oleoresin consists of essential oils, gum and terpenoids. The terpenoid portion contains the boswellic acids that have been shown to be the active constituents in boswellia. Today, extracts are typically standardized to contain 37.5–65% boswellic acids.

Studies have shown that the boswellic acids have an anti-inflammatory action—much like the conventional nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) used by many for inflammatory conditions. Boswellia inhibits pro-inflammatory mediators in the body, such as leukotrienes. As opposed to NSAIDS, long-term use of boswellia does not lead to irritation or ulceration of the stomach.

History

In the ancient Ayurvedic medical texts of India, the gummy exudate from boswellia is grouped with other gum resins, which are referred to collectively as guggals.

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Historically, the guggals were recommended for a variety of conditions, including arthritis, diarrhea, dysentery, pulmonary disease, and ringworm.

Remedies For

Boswellia is Used For

—Bursitis

—Osteoarthritis

—Rheumatoid arthritis

Research conducted in India found that an extract of Boswellia was more beneficial, less toxic, and more potent than the standard drug of choice for rheumatic disorders, Ketoprofen (benzoyl hydrotropic acid). Ketoprofen is preferred over other anti-inflammatories such as indomethacin, phenylbutazone or acetylsalicylic acid.

Boswellic acids (BA) are believed to suppress the proliferating tissue found in the inflammed areas and also prevents the breakdown of connective tissue.

The mechanism is similar to the action of non-steroidal groups of anti-arthritic drugs with no side effects, gastric irritation and ulcerogenic activity.

A purified compound of the boswellia is marketed in India with the brand name Sallaki. Many studies conducted since the original study has confirmed that Boswellia serrata has potent anti-inflammatory and anti-arthritic activity.

Boswellia was found to improve blood supply to the joints and restore integrity of vessels weakened by spasm.

In a double blind placebo controlled study, 12 patients with osteoarthritis were given a herbal formula consisting of Boswellin, Aswagandha, and turmeric or placebo for three months. The patients were evaluated every two weeks. After a fifteen day washout period, the treatment was reversed with the placebo patients getting the drug and vice versa. The results were evaluated over a three month period. The patients receiving the herbal formula showed a significant drop in severeity of pain and disability score. Boswellia serrata may also be useful for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis with no side effects from the traditional drugs of choice.

Description

Boswellia (the resin is also known as Indian frankincense) is a moderate to large branching tree found in the dry, hilly areas of India. When the tree trunk is tapped, a gummy oleoresin is exuded. A purified extract of this resin is used in modern herbal preparations.

Dosage

The standardized extract of the gum oleoresin of boswellia is recommended. For rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis, many people take 150 mg three times per day. As an example, if an extract contains 37.5% boswellic acids, 400 mg of the extract should be taken three times per day. Treatment with boswellia generally lasts eight to twelve weeks.

Safety

Boswellia is generally safe when used as directed. Rare side effects can include diarrhea, skin rash, and nausea. Any inflammatory joint condition should be closely monitored by a nutritionally oriented physician.

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Bottle Brush

Name: Horsetail.

Biological Name: Equisetum arvense, Equiseti hiemalis, Mu zei, Equisetaceae.

Other Names: Shave grass, scouring rush, equisetum, pewterwort, corncob plant, bottle brush, Horsetail.

Parts Used: Stems, leaves (grass)

Active Compounds

Horsetail is very rich in silicic acid and silicates, which provide approximately 2–3% elemental silicon. Potassium, aluminum, and manganese along with fifteen different types of bioflavonoids are also found in the herb. The presence of these bioflavonoids are believed to cause the diuretic action, while the silicon content is said to exert a connective tissue—strengthening and anti-arthritic action.

Some experts have suggested that the element silicon is a vital component for bone and cartilage formations This would indicate that horsetail may be beneficial in preventing osteoporosis.

Anecdotal reports suggest that horsetail may be of some use in the treatment of brittle nails.

The Constituents are

—Alkaloids, including nicotine, palustrine and palustrinine

—Flavonoids such as isoquercitrin and equicetrin

—Sterols including cholesterol, isofucosterol, campesterol.

—Silicic acid.

Miscellaneous: A saponin equisitonin, dimethylsulphone, thiaminase & aconitic acid.

History

Since it was recommended by the Roman physician Galen, several cultures have employed horsetail as a folk remedy for kidney and bladder troubles, arthritis, bleeding ulcers, and tuberculosis.

Additionally, the topical use of horsetail is said to stop the bleeding of wounds and promote rapid healing. The use of this herb as an abrasive cleanser to scour pots or shave wood illustrates the origin of horsetail's common names-scouring rush and shave grass.

Remedies For

Astringent, diuretic, vulnerary, diaphoretic

Horsetail is Useful For

—Brittle nails

—Osteoarthritis

—Osteoporosis

—Rheumatoid arthritis

—Water retention

Arthritis: Horsetail absorbs gold dissolved in water better than most plants, as much as 4 ounces per ton of fresh stalks. Small amounts of gold is found useful for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, and the Chinese used horsetail for this disease.

Diuretic: Horsetail contains a weak diuretic chemical lending support to its traditional use as a urinary stimulant. Horsetail is also useful for water retention.

Horsetail is an excellent astringent for the genito-urinary system, reducing hemorrhage and healing wounds thanks to the high silica

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content. It acts as a mild diuretic. It is also invaluable in the treatment of incontinence and bed wetting in children. It is considered a specific in cases of inflammation or benign enlargement of the prostate gland. Externally it is a vulnerary. In some cases it has been found to ease the pain of rheumatism and stimulate the healing of chilblains.

Combinations: Horsetail is often combined with Hydrangea in the treatment of prostate troubles.

Traditional Chinese Medicine: Chinese medicine uses horsetail for such ailments as bloodshot eyes and conjunctivitis. Because it is rich in trace minerals, it is excellent as a semi-regular tonic.

DO NOT USE THIS HERB FOR EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME.

Description

Horsetail is widely distributed throughout the temperate climate zones of the northern hemisphere, including Asia, North America, and Europe.

Horsetail is a unique plant with two distinctive types of stems. One variety of stem grows early in spring and looks like asparagus, except for its brown color and the spore-containing cones on top. The mature form of the herb, appearing in summer, has branched, thin, green, sterile stems and looks very much like a feathery tail.

Horsetail is the sole descendant of the giant fernlike plants that covered the earth some 200 million years ago.

The herb's creeping rhizome sends up hollow, jointed, virtually leafless, bamboo-like stalks that reach 6 feet. At the ends of the stacks, spore-bearing structures develop which resemble horsetails, corncobs, or bottle brushes.

Dosage

Horsetail can be taken daily as a tea at 1–4 grams per day.

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 2 teaspoonfuls of the dried plant and let infuse for 15–20 minutes.. This should be drunk three times a day.

Bath: A useful bath can be made to help in rheumatic pain and chilblains. Allow 100 grams (3 1/2 ounces of the herb to steep in hot water for an hour. Add this to the bath.

Tincture: Take 2–6 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

This herb should not be used by pregnant women, those who are weak, or those with excessive dryness or frequent urination. Horsetail is generally considered safe for non-pregnant adults at the recommended dose. The only concern would be that the correct species of horse-tail is used; Equisetum palustre is another species of horsetail, which contains toxic alkaloids and is a well-known livestock poison. FDA rates horsetail as a herb of undefined safety.

The Canadian Health Protection Branch requires supplement manufacturers to document that their products do not contain the enzyme thiaminase, found in crude horsetail, which destroys the B vitamin thiamin. Since alcohol, temperature, and alkalinity neutralize this potentially harmful enzyme, tinctures, fluid extracts, or preparations of the herb subjected to 100°C temperatures during manufacturing should be the preferable form of the plant utilized

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for medicinal use. Horsetail is relatively high in selenium. Too much selenium may cause birth defects. In marshes downstream from heavily fertilized agricultural areas, horsetail may be hazardously high in selenium. Pregnant women should avoid this herb. Equisetine, a chemical contained in horsetail, in large amounts is a nerve poison. Don't let children play with the stems. Ingesting the juice has reportedly caused reactions in children.

BRAHMA-MANDUKI

Name: Gotu Kola.

Biological Name: Centella asiatica, Hydrocotyle asiatica Umbelliferae.

Other Names: Gotu Kola, Brahmi, Chi-hsueh Ts'ao, man t'ien hsing, Indian Pennywort, Brahma-manduki.

Parts Used: The entire plant is used medicinally.

Active Compounds

The primary active constituent is triterpenoid compounds. Saponins (also called triterpenoids) known as asiaticoside, madecassoside, and madasiatic acid are the primary active constituents. These saponins beneficially affect collagen (the material that makes up connective tissue), for example, inhibiting its production in hyperactive scar tissue. Also contains a green, strongly volatile oil composed of an unidentified terpene acetate, camphor, cineole, and other essential oils. Cintella oil also contains glycerides of fatty acids, various plant sterols such as campesterol, stigmasterol, and sitosterol, and various polyacetylene compounds.

Description

Gotu Kola is a perennial plant native to India and other tropical countries. Its appearance changes, depending on growing conditions. In shallow water, the plant puts forth floating roots and the leaves rest on top of the water. In dry locations, it puts out numerous small roots and the leaves are small and thin. Typically, the constantly growing roots gives rise to reddish stolons. The leaves can reach a width of 1 inch and a length of 6 inches. Usually 3 to 6 red flowers arise in a sessile manner or on very short pedicels in auxiliary umbels. The fruit, formed throughout the growing season, is approximately 2 inches long with 7 to 9 ribs and a curved, strongly thickened pericarp.

History

Gotu Kola has been used as a medicine in the Ayurvedic tradition of India for thousands of years. It is listed in the historic Susruta Samhita, an ancient Indian medical text. The herb is also used by the people of Java and other Indonesian islands. In China, gotu kola is one of the reported "miracle elixirs of life". This was attributed to a healer named LiChing Yun who, legends say, lived 256 years by taking a tea brewed from gotu kola and other herbs. Gotu Kola is prominently mentioned in the Shennong Herbal compiled in China over 2000 years ago. In the nineteenth century, Gotu Kola and its extracts were incorporated into the Indian pharmacopeia, wherein addition to being recommended for wound healing, it was recommended in the treatment of skin conditions such as leprosy, lupus, varicose ulcers, eczema, and psoriasis. It was also

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used to treat diarrhea, fever, amenorrhea, and diseases of the female genitourinary tract. Gotu Kola was first accepted as a drug in France in the 1880's.

Remedies For

Alterative, diuretic, febrifuge, nervine, rejuvenative.

Useful For

—AIDS
—Bowel disorders
—Chronic venous insufficiency
—Convulsions
—Eczema
—Elephantiasis
—Epilepsy
—Fever
—Hair loss
—Hypochondria
—Immune system strengthening (cleansing and nourishing)
—Insanity
—Mental function
—Minor burns
—Nervous disorders
—Psoriasis
—Rheumatism
—Scars
—Scleroderma
—Senility
—Skin ulcers
—Tetanus
—Varicose veins
—venereal diseases
—Wound healing

Gotu Kola is a rejuvenative nervine recommended for nervous disorders, including epilepsy, senility, and premature aging. As a brain tonic, it is said to aid intelligence and memory. It strengthens the adrenal glands while cleansing the blood to treat skin impurities.

It is used as an aid for meditation that is said to balance the two sides of the brain. It is particularly helpful for super-stressed persons. Gotu Kola is considered "food for the brain". It is said to combat stress and depression, energize flagging mental powers, fight sterility, ward off a nervous breakdown, and improve reflexes.

Gotu Kola stimulates the central nervous system, rebuilds energy reserves, relieves high blood pressure, and helps the body defend against various toxins. It is used to treat rheumatism, blood diseases, congestive heart failure, urinary tract infections, venereal diseases, hepatitis, and high blood pressure. It is a mild diuretic that can help shrink swollen membranes and aid in the elimination of excess fluids. It hastens the healing of wounds.

Gotu kola has a positive effect on the circulatory system. It improves the flow of blood while strengthening the veins and capillaries. It has been used successfully to treat phlebitis, leg cramps, and abnormal tingling of the extremities.

It reduces scarring when applied during inflammatory period of the wound. It was found effective when applied on patients with third degree burns, when the treatment commenced immediately after the accident. Daily local application to the affected area, along with intramuscular injections, limited

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the shrinking of the skin as it healed. It prevented infection and inhibited scar formation.

It is the best rejuvenative herb for brain cells and nerves, promotes intelligence.

Dosage

External: Brahmi oil is applied externally all over the entire body, including the scalp, to treat nervous disorders.

Dried gotu kola leaf can be made into a tea by adding 1–2 teaspoons to 150 ml of boiling water and allowing it to steep for ten to fifteen minutes. Three cups are usually drunk per day. Tincture can also be used at a dose of 10–20 ml three times per day.

Standardized extracts containing up to 100% total triterpenoids are generally taken as 60 mg once or twice per day

Safety

Gotu Kola is generally well tolerated when taken internally. The topical application of gotu kola salve has been reported to cause contact dermatitis, although very infrequently. Avoid taking gotu cola if you are pregnant or is breastfeeding.

Brewer's Yeast

Latin Name: Saccharomyces cerevisiae

A Remedy For

—Appetite loss
—Bronchitis
—Colds
—Cough
—Eczema, boils, acne
—Indigestion
—Sore throat
—Tendency to infection

Brewer's Yeast is typically used as a remedy for chronic forms of acne and boils, and as an appetite stimulant.

What It Is; Why It Works

Brewer's Yeast kills bacteria and promotes production of certain white blood cells. It has been used since antiquity, in all probability, both for the preparation of alcoholic beverages and as a medication. Brewer's Yeast grows worldwide and is found extensively in the wild. It is, in fact, an independently living plant, but was not recognized as such until the nineteenth century. Its effectiveness as a health remedy was first confirmed in 1886.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use Brewer's Yeast.

Special Cautions

If you are prone to migraine headaches, use Brewer's Yeast with caution; it can trigger migraines in susceptible people. Large quantities of Brewer's Yeast can cause gas. In some people it prompts allergic-like reactions such as itching, eruptions, rashes, and swelling.

Possible Drug Interactions

Brewer's Yeast can trigger an increase in blood pressure if you take it with a drug classified as a monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitor, such as the antidepressants Nardil and Parnate and the Parkinson's disease medication Eldepryl.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

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How To Prepare

Brewer's Yeast is usually supplied as a dietary supplement.

Typical Dosage

Brewer's Yeast is taken orally. The usual daily dosage is 6 grams (about 1 teaspoonful).

Brigham Young Weed

Name: Desert tea.

Biological Name: Ephedra spp.

Other Names: Brigham Young weed, desert herb, ephedra, Mormon tea, squaw tea, teamster's tea, desert tea.

Parts Used: The herb.

Remedies For

Diuretic, febrifuge, tonic. Although most commonly taken as a pleasant beverage, desert tea has also been used as a remedy for kidney and bladder problems.

Natives of the American Southwest drink a decoction several times a day to relieve kidney pain or to treat a fever. American Indians used it, both internally and externally, to treat syphilis and mucous discharges. Early pioneers considered desert tea a good "blood purifier."

Description

Desert tea is a broom-like shrub which somewhat resembles shave grass. Its various species can be found in the and areas of the Northern Hemisphere, including the deserts of the southwestern U.S.

The jointed, grooved, green stems and branches of some species reach heights of up to 7 feet, but most are smaller. Two or three scale-like leaves, more or less persistent depending on the species, grow at each joint in the stem and branches. Male and female cones appear on different plants, the male featuring prominent yellow pollen sacs.

Dosage

Decoction: To use as a diuretic, take a glassful of the cold decoction every morning.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

British Tobacco

Name: Coltsfoot

Biological Name: Tussilago farfara

Other Names: Coughwort, Horsehoof, Foal's Foot, Coltsfoot, bull's foot, horsefoot, butterbur, British tobacco, flower velure, ginger root, kuan dong hua.

Parts Used: Dried flowers and leaves.

Active Compounds

—Flanonoids; rutin, hyperoside and isoquercetin

—Mucilage, consisting of polysaccharides based on glucose, galactose, fructose, arabinose and xylose; and inulin

—Pyrrolizidine alkaloids, including senkirkine and tussilagine

—Tannin.

Remedies For

Expectorant, anti-tussive, anti-spasmodic, demulcent, anti-catarrhal, diuretic, emollient, pectoral, diaphoretic, tonic, antiasthmatic.

Indications: Coltsfoot combines a soothing expectorant effect with an anti-spasmodic

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action. The leaves of this herb contain zinc, a mineral that has been shown to have marked anti-inflammatory effects. Coltsfoot may be used in chronic or acute bronchitis, irritating coughs, whooping coughs and asthma. Its soothing expectorant action gives Coltsfoot a role in most respiratory conditions, including the chronic states of emphysema. As a mild diuretic it has been used in cystitis. The fresh bruised leaves can be applied to boils, abscesses and suppurating ulcers.

Description: A common wild plant in Britain and Europe, growing in damp places. Coltsfoot is a common herb used throughout history for coughs and wheezing. It is the Chinese, however, who primarily emphasize the use of the flowers for this purpose. Interestingly, while the leaves used in the West are primarily used as an anti-inflammatory, the flowers are mostly used by the Chinese for coughs that are due to cold.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried flowers of leaves and let infuse for 10 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day, as hot as possible.

Tincture: Take 2–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: In the treatment of coughs it may be used with White Horehound, Mullein or Elecampane.

Safety

Colts foot flower should not be used for conditions that are of a hot nature. No other information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

BUCKEYE

Name: Horse Chestnut.

Biological Name: Aesculus hippocastanum Hippocastanaceae.

Other Names: Buckeye, Spanish chestnut, horse chestnut.

Parts Used: Seeds, leaves, bark.

Active Compounds

Extracts of the seeds are the source of a saponin known as aescin, which has been shown to promote circulation through the veins. Aescin promotes normal tone in the walls of the veins, thereby promoting return of blood to the heart. This has made both topical and internal horse chestnut extracts popular in Europe for the treatment of chronic venous insufficiency and varicose veins.

Aescin also possesses anti-inflammatory properties and has been shown to reduce edema (swelling with fluid) following trauma, particularly those following sports injuries, surgery, and head injury.

A topical aescin preparation is very popular in Europe for the treatment of acute sprains during sporting events. Horse chestnuts also contain flavonoids, sterols, and tannins.

History

Horse chestnut leaves have been used as a cough remedy and to reduce fevers. They were also believed to reduce pain and inflammation of arthritis and rheumatism. Poultices of the seeds were used topically to treat skin ulcers and skin cancer.

Other uses include the internal and external application for problems of venous circulation, including varicose veins and

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hemorrhoids. The topical preparation was also used to treat phlebitis.

Remedies For

Horse chestnut is beneficial in the treatment of:

—Chronic venous insufficiency

—Edema

—Hemorrhoids

—Sprains and other injuries

—Varicose veins

Utilized extensively in Europe as an anti-inflammatory agent for a variety of conditions, in addition to being used for vascular problems. It is also used for the treatment of varicose veins and inflammatory disorders of the legs.

It also reduced edema. It does this by normalizing the permeability of blood vessel walls.

The leaves of the buckeye plant is believed to be quite effective in the treatment of chest congestions.

Description

The Horse Chestnut tree is native to Asia and northern Greece, but it is now cultivated in many areas of Europe and North America. The tree produces fruits that are made up of a spiny capsule containing one to three large seeds, known as horse chestnuts.

The tree grows from 50 to 80 feet high and bears palmately compound leaves with 5 to 7 wedge shaped, serrate, pointed leaflets. White, red, or yellow flowers appear in panicles from May to June. The fruit is prickly, green, globular capsule which contains from 1 to 6 shiny, brown seeds.

Traditionally, many of the aerial parts of the horse chestnut tree, including the seeds, leaves, and bark, were used in medicinal preparations. Modern extracts of horse chestnut are usually extracts of the seeds, which are high in the active constituent aescin.

Dosage

Traditionally, 0.2–1.0 grams of the dried seeds were used per day. However, only standardized extracts should be used internally.

Horse chestnut seed extracts standardized for aescin content (16–21%) or isolated aescin preparations are often recommended at an initial dose of 90–150 mg of aescin per day. Once improvement is noted, this is usually reduced to a maintenance dose of 35–70 mg of aescin per day. Topical aescin preparations are used in Europe for hemorrhoids, skin ulcers, varicose veins, sports injuries, and trauma of other kinds.

A gel of aescin is typically applied to the affected area three to four times per day. For hemorrhoids and varicose veins, horse chestnut is often combined with witch hazel.

Infusion: Steep 1 tsp. Bark (from branches) in 1 cup water.

Powder: Take 1/2 tsp. For diarrhea, vericose veins, and hemorrhoids.

For catarrh, take 1/4 to 1/2 tsp., two times per day.

Bath Additive: Boil 2 to 2.5 pounds chopped fruit in water and add the resulting liquid to bath water.

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Safety

Internal use of purified horse chestnut extracts standardized for aescin at the doses listed here is generally safe. Isolated reports of kidney damage in persons consuming very large quantities of aescin were made. Horse chestnut should be avoided by anyone with liver or kidney disease. Do not use it if you are pregnant or breast-feeding. Topically, horse chestnut has been associated with rare cases of allergic skin reactions. Circulation disorders and trauma associated with swelling are usually the signs of a serious condition; please consult a health care professional before self-treating with horse chestnut. The leaves, seeds, and green capsule shell sometimes cause poisoning if taken in sufficient amounts. Roasting the seeds seems to destroy the poison in them.

Buddleia Flower

Name: Buddleia flower.

Biological Name: Buddleiae officinalis, Loganiaceae.

Other Names: Buddleia flower, Buddleia flower bud, butterfly bush, Mi meng hua.

Parts Used: Flower.

Remedies For

Antispasmodic, antipyretic, mild diuretic.

This herb is used for conditions of the eyes, such as bloodshot eyes, excessive tearing, excessive excretion, or sensitivity to light (photophobia). Because of its mild actions, it can be used for either excess or deficient conditions.

Description

Cultivated as an ornamental in the west.

Dosage

4–12 grams.

Bugle

Name: Bugle.

Biological Name: Ajuga reptans Labiatae.

Other Names: Bugle, creeping bugle, carpenter's herb.

Parts Used: Leaves, herb.

Remedies For

Edicinally to treat bleeding from cuts and other wounds; popular ground cover among other herbs and for edging containers.

Description

Short prostrate perennial, 6 in. Rosettes of coarse shining green leaves, and spires of blue, white or rose flowers in midsummer. Spreads freely by runners. Several cultivated forms including 'Atropurpurea', with metallic purple leaves, and 'Variegata', cream and green, grows best in shade.

Dosage

Infusion.

Safety

No information available. Some of the herbs could react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Bugleweed

Name: Bugleweed.

Biological Name: Lycopus europaeus Labiatae.

Other Names: Sweet Bugle, Water Bugle, Gypsywort, Bugleweed.

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Parts Used: Aerial parts.

Active Compounds

—Phenolic acid derivatives; caffeic, rosmarinic, chlorogenic and ellagic acids.

—Pimaric acid methyl ester.

Remedies For

Diuretic, peripheral vasoconstrictor, astringent, nervine, anti-tussive.

Bugleweed is a specific for over-active thyroid glands, especially where the symptoms include tightness of breathing, palpitation and shaking. It may safely be used where palpitations occur that are of nervous origin. Bugleweed will aid the weak heart where there is associated build-up of water in the body. As a sedative cough reliever it will ease irritating coughs, especially when they are of nervous origin.

Description

Eastern USA-L. virginicus. Europe-L. europaeus.

A perennial herb growing up to 12 inches tall. Its creeping runners produce rosettes of leaves; the whole structure forms a carpet-like mat. The lower leaves are spatula shaped and often have wavy edges, while the upper leaves are toothed and elliptical or oval. Small blue to purple flowers appear from May to July.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1 teaspoonful of the dried herb and let infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: Bugleweed may be used with nervines such as Skullcap or Valerian.

Bupleurum

Name: Bupleurum.

Biological Name: Bupleurum falcatum Umbelliferae.

Other Names: Bupleurum, Chai hu, hare's ear.

Parts Used: Root.

Remedies For

Diaphoretic, antipyretic, anti-inflammatory, anti-malarial. Clears heat, regulates liver qi, raises the yang. It is used for treating the common cold that is accompanied by alternating symptoms of chills and fever; malaria; chest pain; prolapse of the anus, uterus, and other internal organs; and irregular menstruation.

Though it is classified as a cool surface-relieving herb, it is commonly used in Chinese herbalism for stagnant liver qi, which refers to a pattern of symptoms including stifling feelings in the chest, flank pain, and emotional mood swings.

For some, especially those with a tendency to yin deficiency, it can bring up unwarranted feelings of anger. This herb is also very well known for its sedative action, especially in the patented medicine Xiao Yao Wan (Bupleurum Sedative Pills).

It is also effective for women with menstrual problems associated with premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

Dosage

3–9 grams.

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Safety

Bupleurum should not be used by those with depleted fluids, those with liver yang rising, those with extreme headaches, or those with such eye diseases as conjunctivitis.

CAUTION: DO NOT USE BUPLEURUM LONGIRADIATUM. IT IS POISONOUS.

Butcher's Broom

Name: Butcher's broom.

Biological Name: Ruscus aculeatus.

Other Names: Butcher's broom.

Parts Used: Rhizome.

Active Compounds

Steroidal molecules called ruscogenin and neoruscogenin are responsible for the medicinal actions of butcher's broom. Similar to diosgenin, found in wild yam, ruscogenins decrease vascular permeability-which accounts for the anti-inflammatory activity of this herb. Butcher's broom also causes small veins to constrict.

Recent pharmacological findings indicate vasoconstrictive and anti-inflammatory properties of Butcher's Broom.

The saponins it contains constricts the veins and decreases the permeability of capillaries. It is used in the treatment of varicose veins and hemorrhoids.

History

Butcher's broom is so named because the mature branches were bundled and used as brooms by butchers. The young shoots were sometimes eaten as food. Ancient physicians used the roots as a diuretic in the treatment of urinary problems. Mediterranean healers had used the rhizome for the treatment of a variety of circulatory and inflammatory disorders. Roman scholar Pliny report the use of Butcher's broom for the treatment of varicose veins in 60 A.D. Ancient Greek have used this to cure swelling.

Remedies For

Butchers broom is used for

—Atherosclerosis

—Chronic venous insufficiency

—Hemorrhoids

—Varicose veins

Butcher's broom has vasoconstrictive and anti-inflammatory properties with no toxicity problems when administered correctly. It is also used in the treatment of varicose veins and hemorrhoids.

Clinical trials have shown the effectiveness of Butcher's broom in treating chronic phlebopathy of the lower limbs and those suffering from varicose veins. In these trials, an extract of butcher's broom was used.

Description

Butcher's broom is a spiny, small-leafed evergreen bush native to the Mediterranean region and northwest Europe. It is a member of the lily family and is similar to asparagus in many ways. The roots and young stems of butcher's broom are used medicinally.

Dosage

Ointments and suppositories including butcher's broom are typically used for hemorrhoids. These are often applied or inserted at night before going to bed. Encapsulated butcher's broom extracts, often combined with vitamin C or flavonoids, can be used for systemic venous insufficiency

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in the amount of 1,000 mg three times per day. Alternatively, standardized extracts providing 50–100 mg of ruscogenins per day can be taken. If raw herb is used, use 2 teaspoons of powdered root per 1.5 pints of boiling water, boiled in a covered container for about 0.5 hour, at a slow boil. Allow the liquid to cool slowly in the closed container. Drink cold, 2 to 3 tablespoons 6 times daily.

Safety

There are no significant side effects or problems if butcher's broom is used in the amounts listed here.

Butternut

Name: Butternut.

Biological Name: Juglans cineraria, Juglandaceae.

Other Names: Butternut, White Walnut, Lemon Walnut, Oilnut, Butternut, Kisky Thomas nut.

Parts Used: Inner bark.

Active Compounds

Naphthaquinones, including juglone, juglandin and juglandic acid.

—Fixed and essential oil.

—Tannins.

Remedies For

Laxative, Cholagogue, anthelmintic.

Butternut is used as a dermatological agent, anti-hemorrhoid and cholagogue. It is a purgative.

Herbalist believe that this herb influences the liver, small intestines, colon and rectum, causing and increased manufacture and elimination of bile, as well as increased activity of the glands of the intestinal tract. Full doses produce large bilious evacuations, without much pain or griping, in which respect its action very much resembles that of Iris versicolor.

It is suggested for treating chronic jaundice, constipation, skin diseases, eczema, herpes, acne, and impetigo pemphigus.

It is an old fashioned remedy.

Description: Native of the USA.

Dosage

Tincture: 1–2 ml.

As a powder, use five to ten grains or take one No. 00 capsule daily.

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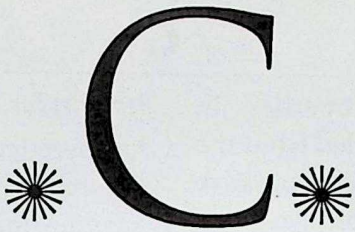

Cabbage

Latin Name: Brassica oleracea var. capitata.

A Remedy For

Although some consider Cabbage juice a remedy for stomachache, ulcers, poor digestion, bronchitis, cough, and rheumatism, its effectiveness has not been formally recognized. In Asian medicine, Cabbage is also used to treat abdominal disorders, diarrhea, and skin diseases.

What It Is; Why It Works

Cabbage has been valued for its healing properties since the time of Christ. The 1st Century healer Dioscorides recommended it for a variety of ailments, including diarrhea, snake bite, and worms. Today it's recognized for its ability to boost the stomach lining's resistance to gastric acids.

Originally cultivated in the Mediterranean region, the plant now grows in damp, temperate climates worldwide. Juice of the white Cabbage is the preferred medicinal product.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Cabbage juice.

Special Cautions

At customary dosage levels, Cabbage poses no risks.

Possible Drug Interactions

No drug interactions are known.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Juice can be pressed from fresh chopped Cabbage, or purchased in prepared form.

Typical Dosage

As part of a bland diet: 1 quart daily.

For stomachache: 1 teaspoonful before each meal.

Overdosage

No information is available.

Cajuput Oil

Latin Name: Melaleuca leucadendron.

Other Names: Paperbark Tree, White Wood.

A Remedy For

Rheumatism.

Cajuput Oil eases the discomfort of rheumatism, pulled muscles or ligaments, sprains, bruises, muscle tension, slipped disk, low back pain, and sciatica.

What It Is; Why It Works

Cajuput Oil works by stimulating the circulation around the point of application.

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It also shows antiseptic properties in laboratory tests. The oil is distilled from the fresh leaves and twigs of a large tree native to southeast Asia and the tropical regions of Australia. Historically, it has been used to help loosen phlegm and relieve spasms. It has a pleasant fragrance reminiscent of camphor and eucalyptus.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Cajuput Oil.

Special Cautions

Skin inflammation is a possibility. When using the oil on infants and small children, avoid the facial area. Application near the nose could cause throat spasms and interfere with breathing.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Available as a steam-distilled oil.

Typical Dosage

Follow the manufacturer's directions.

Overdosage

No information on overdosage is available.

Calcium Sulfate

Name: Gypsum.

Biological Name: Gypsum fibrosum.

Other Names: Gypsum, Shi gao, Calcium Sulfate.

Remedies For

Antipyretic, sedative Gypsum is used for excess heat in the lungs or stomach manifesting as toothache, acute mouth sores, painful and bleeding gums, inflammation, or very high fever without chills.

For inflammation, it can be used either externally or internally. It is used externally for wounds or burns.

Dosage

10-50 grams.

Safety

This substance should not be used by those with a weak stomach or without true heat.

Calendula

Name: Calendula.

Biological Name: Calendula officinalis.

Other Names: Marigold, garden marigold, holigold, Mary bud, pot marigold, Calendula.

Parts Used: Flowers, leaves

Active Compounds

The flavonoids, found in high amounts in calendula, account for much of its anti-inflammatory activity; triterpene saponins may also be important. Calendula also contains carotenoids.

Investigations into anticancer and antiviral actions of calendula are continuing. At this time, there is insufficient evidence to recommend clinical use of calendula for cancer. There is evidence suggesting use of calendula for some viral infections. The constituents responsible for these actions are not entirely clear.

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History

Calendula flowers were believed to be useful in reducing inflammation, wound healing, and as an antiseptic. Calendula was used to treat various skin diseases, ranging from skin ulcerations to eczema. Internally, the soothing effects of calendula have been used for stomach ulcers and inflammation. A sterile tea has also been applied in cases of conjunctivitis. Historically, calendula is found to be antispasmodic, aperient, cholagogue, diaphoretic, vulnerary. An infusion of the flowers can be used for such gastrointestinal problems as ulcers, stomach cramps, colitis, and diarrhea. It is also useful taken internally for fever, boils, abscesses, and to prevent recurrent vomiting. The fresh juice of the herb or flowers can substitute for the infusion. For external use, a good salve for wounds can be made from dried flowers or leaves, from the juice pressed out of the fresh flowers, or from the tincture. The salve or dilute tincture is good for bruises, sprains, pulled muscles, sores, and boils. The tincture is used internally for gastritis and for menstrual difficulties.

Remedies For

Calendula may be useful in the treatment of:

—Eczema

—Gastritis

—Minor burns (including sunburn)

—Wound healing

Applied locally as a tincture, oil, or lotion, marigold is considered a natural antiseptic by homeopaths. The crushed petals may be combined with olive oil to form an ointment for external application to cuts, bruises, sores and burns.

The infusion is used to soothe watery, irritated eyes, and for relief in bronchial complaints. It is also used frequently in the treatment of liver disorders. It is thought to induce perspiration in case of fever. Recent clinical studies have shown that marigold flower extracts lower blood pressure and have sedative effects. Marigold is a common adulterant to saffron.

In 1955, an Australian patent was issued for the use of marigold extracts in the treatment of burns in humans.

Description

Calendula grows as a common garden plant throughout North America and Europe. The golden-orange or yellow flowers of calendula have been used as medicine for centuries. Calendula is an annual garden plant with an anular, branched, hairy stem 1 to 2 feet high. The leaves are alternate, sessile, spatulate or oblanceolate, dentate with widely spaced teeth, and hairy. From June to October, the plant bears large, yellow or orange, terminal flower heads.

Dosage

A tea of calendula can be made by pouring 200 ml of boiling water over 1–2 teaspoons of the flowers, which is steeped, covered for ten to fifteen minutes, strained, and then drunk. At least 3 cups of tea are generally drunk per day.

Tincture is similarly used three times a day, taking 1–2 ml each time. The tincture can be taken in water or tea.

Prepared ointments are often useful for skin problems, although wet dressings made by dipping cloth into the tea (after it has cooled) are also effective. Home treatment for eye

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conditions is not recommended, as absolute sterility must be maintained.

Juice: Take 1 tsp. At a time, always freshly pressed.

Tincture: To make, soak a handful of flowers in 0.5 quart rectified alcohol or whiskey for 5 to 6 weeks. A dose is 5 to 20 drops.

Salve: Boil 1 oz dried flowers or leaves, or 1tsp fresh juice, with 1 oz of lard.

Safety

Except for the very rare person who is allergic to calendula and therefore should not use it, there are no known side effects or interactions.

California Barberry

Name: Oregon Mountain Grape.

Biological Name: Berberis aquifolium, Berberidaceae.

Other Names: Oregon Mountain Grape, wild Oregon grape, holly-leaved barberry, mahonia, California barberry, mountain grape.

Parts Used: Rhizome and root.

Active Compounds

Alkaloids of the isoquinoline type; berberine, berbamine, hydrastine, oxycanthine.

Remedies For

Alterative, cholagogue, laxative, anti-emetic, anti-catarrhal, tonic.

Oregon Grape is similar in action to Golden Seal and Barberry. If is mainly used in the treatment of chronic and scaly skin conditions such as psoriasis and eczema. Also useful for stomach and gall-bladder conditions, especially where there is associated nausea and vomiting. As a laxative it may safely be used in chronic constipation.

Combinations: For skin problems it will combine well with Burdock Root, Yellow Dock and Cleavers. For gall-bladder problems it may be used with Black Root and Fringe Tree Bark.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the root in a cup of water, bring to boil and simmer for 10–15 minutes. Drink three times a day.

Tincture: 1–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Californian Poppy

Name: Californian Poppy.

Biological Name: Eschscholzia californica Papaveraceae.

Other Names: Californian Poppy.

Parts Used: Dried aerial parts.

Active Compounds

Alkaloids similar to Opium Poppy; flavone glycosides.

History

Local Indians used the plant as a painkiller, especially for toothache, and as a poultice for sores and ulcers. Indian women used it to charm unresponsive lovers. Today some cook the plant in olive oil to make a hair tonic that is said to make the hair grow thick and shiny.

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Remedies For

Nervine, hypnotic, anti-spasmodic, anodyne.

Californian Poppy has the reputation of being a non-addictive alternative to the Opium Poppy, though it is less powerful. It has been used as a sedative and hypnotic for children, where there is over-excitability and sleeplessness. It can be used wherever an anti-spasmodic remedy is required. The Native Americans used it for colic pains and it may be useful in the treatment of gall-bladder colic.

Description

A perennial herb, with spreading stems, growing up to 2 feet tall. The leaves are divided many times into fine greenish-gray segments. Conspicuous flowers (February-September) range in color from bright yellow to deep orange and have four petals and many stamens.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10 minutes. A cup should be drunk at night to promote restful sleep.

Tincture: Take 1–4 ml of the tincture at night.

CAMPHOR

Latin Name: Cinnamomum camphora.

Other Name: Cemphire.

A Remedy For

—Blood pressure problems

—Bronchitis

—Cough

—Irregular heartbeat

—Rheumatism

—Weak heart In Asia, Camphor is also used for asthma, indigestion, inflammations, and muscle pain.

What It Is; Why It Works

Camphor is an active ingredient in such familiar over-the-counter remedies as Vicks VapoRub and Mentholatum ointment. Rubbed on the skin, Camphor stimulates circulation. Its inhaled vapors reduce bronchial secretions. When taken internally, it combats bronchial spasms, improves breathing, and promotes circulation. In years past, cakes of Camphor were used as a moth-repellent.

It was once popular as a remedy for stomach and bowel complaints, but fell out of favor due to the danger of overdose, which can easily prove fatal. It was once believed to prevent infectious disease, a fallacy that probably sprang from its strong odor. Camphor is an import from Japan and Taiwan, where it's distilled from the wood of the camphor tree, a large evergreen.

Avoid If...

There are no medical conditions that preclude the use of Camphor by adults, but Camphor salves should not be used on infants.

Special Cautions

External application of Camphor can cause skin irritation and even lead to poisoning through inhalation. Eczema (a skin inflammation) occasionally appears after application of oily salves containing camphor.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

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Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Camphor is used primarily in salves. However, solid and liquid preparations can be used for inhalation or taken internally.

Typical Dosage

For external use, concentrations of Camphor in salves should not exceed 25% for adults and 5% for children. When taken internally, the usual daily dosage is 30 to 300 milligrams.

Overdosage

As little as 1 gram can be lethal for a child. In adults, a dose of 20 grams can prove fatal. Symptoms of overdose, particularly in children, include intoxication, delirium, spasms, and breathing disturbances. If you suspect an overdose, seek medical attention immediately.

CANG ER ZI

Name: Xanthium.

Biological Name: Xanthii sibirici Compositae.

Other Names: Xanthium, cang er zi, cocklebur fruit.

Remedies For

Antirheumatic, analgesic, antifungal, decongestant. One of the most important herbs for sinus congestion, chronic nasal discharge, respiratory allergies, and loss of smell. It is also used to relieve aches and pains caused by wind-damp-cold conditions.

Dosage

3–9 grams.

Safety

Xanthium should not be used by those with blood deficiency (anemia). Caution: Overdose can result in vomiting, abdominal pain, and diarrhea.

CANKER ROOT

Name: Gold Thread.

Biological Name: Coptis teeta, Coptis trifolia.

Other Names: Gold Thread, Mamira, Mishamitita, Mamira, yellow root, mouth root, canker root.

Description

This herb is found in the Himalayan regions of India.

Parts Used: Dried Root.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Actions

Alterative, antipyretic, bitter tonic.

Uses

—canker sores
—debility
—digestion
—dyspepsia
—chronic gall bladder inflammation
—catarrhal and rheumatic conjunctivitis
—inflammation of the stomach
—jaundice
—sore throat (when used as a gargle)
—visceral obstructions
—ulcerative colitis
—ulcers
—vaginal infections

Dosage

Paste, eye salve, powder, infusion, extract.

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Safety

CAUTION: DO NOT USE IS YOU ARE SUFFERING FROM NAUSEA OR VOMITING CAUSED BY A STOMACH HYPOACTIVITY OR DIARRHEA DUE TO SPLEEN OR KIDNEY DEFICIENCY. LONG TERM USE AGGRAVATES THE SPLEEN AND STOMACH.

No further information about the safety of this herb is available. Use caution. Ayurvedic herbs are often taken in combination to neutralize the toxicity one herb with the opposing effect of other. Do not take except under the supervision of a qualified professional.

Cannabis Seed

Name: Cannabis seed.

Biological Name: Cannabis sativae Moraceae.

Other Names: Cannabis seed, hemp seed, Huo ma ren.

Parts Used: Seed.

Remedies For

Laxative, antihypertensive. Hemp seeds are used for constipation associated with dryness and in deficiency. For external use, the seeds can be ground to a flour and applied as a poultice on sores and slow-healing wounds.

Dosage

9–30 grams.

Safety

Although cannabis seed is considered safe, it should not be taken for extended periods of time.

Cape Jasmine Fruit

Name: Gardenia fruit.

Biological Name: Gardeniae jasminoidis Rubiaceae.

Other Names: Gardenia, Cape Jasmine Fruit, Gardenia fruit, Zhi zi.

Parts Used: Fruit.

Remedies For

Cholagogue, anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, blood circulation promoter. Purges heat, disperses fire, dispels damp heat, cools blood, resolves bruises. Gardenia fruit is used for fever with irritability or restlessness and urinary tract infections.

It is effective for any bleeding in the mucous membranes, such as the nasal passages, the bowels, or the urinary tract. For bleeding, the ashes of the calcined herb are most effective; a teaspoon is taken internally at intervals or applied externally.

Dosage

3–12 grams.

Safety

Gardenia fruit should not be used by those who have diarrhea.

Capillaris

Name: Oriental wormwood.

Biological Name: Artemisiae capillaris Compositae.

Other Names: Oriental wormwood, capillaris, in chen hao.

Parts Used: Whole plant.

Remedies For

Antipyretic, antimicrobial, diuretic,

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cholagogue, lowers both cholesterol and blood pressure.

Useful to treat liver and/or gallbladder imbalances, with symptoms of hepatitis, jaundice, and gallbladder problems.

Dosage

9–15 grams.

Combination

For internal damp heat with symptoms of hepatitis, jaundice, gallbladder inflammation, and gallstone attack.

(Pulse: Deep and rapid or slippery and rapid.

Tongue: A yellow greasy coat.)

Capillaris Combination (Yin Chen Hao Tang): 10 grams of capillaris, 6 grams of gardenia fruit, and 6 grams of rhubarb.

Safety

Capillaris should not be used when there is jaundice caused by qi deficiency with no signs of damp heat.

CARAWAY

Name: Caraway.

Biological Name: Carum carvi Umbelliferae.

Other Names: Carum, Caraway.

Parts Used: Seeds.

Active Compounds

Volatile oil, consisting of carvone (40–60%) and limonene, with dihydrocarvone, carveol, dihydrocarveol, pinen, thujone, and other minor constituents.

Flavonoids: Mainly quercetin derivatives

Miscellaneous: Polysaccharide, protein, fixed oil calcium oxalate.

History

Caraway had been used since the ancient times to calm the digestive tract and expel gas. Caraway seeds have been found in prehistoric food remains from 3500 B.C. The ancient Greek physician Dioscorides mentioned the seeds to aid digestion, and herbals down through the ages have recommended them for indigestion, gas, and infant colic. Throughout history, in Europe, the Middle East, and early America, caraway was a favorite addition to laxative herbs because it tempered their often violent effects. It was also used for menstrual cramps, menstruation promotion, and milk promotion in nursing mothers.

Remedies For

Carminative, anti-spasmodic, expectorant, emmenagogue, galactogogue, astringent, anti-microbial.

Caraway is Useful as

Digestive Aid: Two chemicals present in caraway seeds (carvol and carvene) soothe the smooth muscle tissue of the digestive tract and help expel gas.

Women's Health: Antispasmodic properties of caraway seed can be taken advantage of in soothing the digestive tract, muscles such as uterus, etc. It is useful for menstrual cramps. Caraway is used as a calming herb to ease flatulent dyspepsia and intestinal colic, especially in children. It stimulate the appetite. Its astringency is taken advantage of in the treatment of diarrhea, and in laryngitis as a gargle. It is also used in the treatment for bronchitis and bronchial asthma. It has been used to increase milk flow in nursing mothers.

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Description

Native to Europe, Asia and North Africa, widely cultivated. Caraway is an attractive perennial that reaches 2 feet. It has feathery leaves and umbrella like clusters of tiny white flowers, which bloom in early summer. The seeds are deep brown, flat and oblong in shape.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1 teaspoonful of freshly crushed seeds and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Oil: Take 3 to 4 drops of caraway oil, three times a day.

Powder: Take 1/4 to 1/2 tsp., two to three times a day.

Combinations: For flatulence and colic Caraway combines well with Chamomile and Calamus, in diarrhea with Agrimony and Bayberry and in bronchitis with White Horehound.

Safety

No reports of harm about the use of caraway is available. It is in the list of herbs considered as safe by FDA. Caraway is safe in amounts specified. If you experience any side reactions, please see your doctor immediately and stop taking the herb.

CAROB

Name: Carob

Biological Name: Ceratonia siliqua

Other Names: St-john's bread, John's bread, Carob

Parts Used: Pods, seeds

Active Compounds

The main constituents of carob are large carbohydrates (sugars) and tannins.

The sugars make carob gummy and able to act as a thickener to absorb water and help bind together watery stools.

Tannins from carob, being water insoluble, do not bind proteins as some tannins do. Carob tannins do bind to (and thereby inactivate) toxins and inhibit growth of bacteria-both of which are beneficial in the treatment of diarrhea.

Dietary fiber and sugars may make food more viscous in the stomach and thus interfere with reflux of acid into the esophagus.

History

Carob has long been eaten as food. John the Baptist is said to have eaten it, and thus it is sometimes called St. John's bread. Carob pods have been used to treat diarrhea for centuries.

Remedies For

Carob is used for

—Diarrhea

—Indigestion and heartburn

Description

Carob is originally from the Mediterranean region and the western part of Asia. Today, it is grown mostly in Mediterranean countries. The pods are used. Carob pods come from evergreen trees; the gum from carob seeds is called locust bean gum.

Dosage

Mix 15 grams of carob powder with applesauce for children. Adults should take at least 20

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grams a day. The powder can be mixed in apple-sauce or with sweet potatoes. Carob should be taken with plenty of water.

Please note that infant diarrhea must be monitored by a health care professional and that proper hydration with a high electrolyte fluid is critical during acute diarrhea.

Safety

Carob is generally very safe; only rarely have allergic reactions been reported.

CAROSELLA

Name: Fennel.

Biological Name: Foeniculum vulgare Umbelliferae.

Other Names: Large fennel, sweet fennel, wild fennel, finocchio, carosella, Florence fennel, Fennel.

Parts Used: Root, seed.

Active Compounds

The main active constituents, which includes the terpenoid anethole, are found in the volatile oil. Anethole and other terpenoids may have estrogen-like activity and inhibit spasms in smooth muscles, such as those in the intestinal tract. Recent studies have found fennel to possess diuretic, choleretic (increase in production of bile), pain-reducing, fever-reducing, and anti-microbial actions.

History

One author reports that fennel may have bestowed immortality in the Greek legend of Prometheus. During third century B.C. Hippocrates prescribed fennel to treat infant colic. Four hundred years later, Dioscorides called it an appetite suppressant and recommended the seeds to nursing mothers to boost milk production.

The Roman naturalist Pliny included fennel in 22 remedies. He suggested that fennel cured eye problems, including blindness. Later it was thought to treat jaundice.

Fennel seeds are a common cooking spice, particularly for use with fish. After meals, they are used in several cultures to prevent gas and upset stomach. The seeds are also used in Latin America to increase the flow of breast milk.

Remedies For

Stomachic, carminative, pectoral, diuretic, diaphoretic, aromatic.

Useful for

—Colic

—Indigestion

—Irritable bowel syndrome

The fennel tea traditionally made a good eye wash. It is a tested remedy for gas, acid stomach, gout, cramps, colic and spasms. Fennel seed ground and made into tea is believed to be good for snake bites, insect bites or food poisoning. Excellent for obesity. It increases the flow of urine and also increases the menstrual flow. Fennel oil was traditionally rubbed over painful joints to relieve pain. It was gargled for hoarseness and sore throat.

Digestive Aid: Fennel relaxes the smooth muscle lining the digestive tract (making it an antispasmodic). It also helps expel gas. It kills some bacteria. In Germany, fennel is used like anise and caraway as a treatment for indigestion, gas pains, and infant colic.

Women's Health: Fennel had been used to

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promote menstruation in women. One studey suggests that fennel has mild estrogenic effect (It acts like the female hormone estrogen). This may be partially responsible for the use of fennel for milk production and for stimulating menstruation. It may be useful to relieve the pains of menopause in older women.

Description

Fennel is a biennial or perennial plant that grows wild in the Mediterranean area and in the Asia Minor, but is commonly cultivated in the US and Europe. The long, carrot shaped root produces a stout, pithy, finely grooved stem with fine buish stripes.

The leaves are decompound, dissected into numerous filiform segments, the upper leaves on broad sheaths that surround the stem. Yellow flowers appear from July to October. The fruit consists of two joined carpels, together taking an oblong form with prominent ribs.

Dosage

Whole seeds may be chewed or used in tea. To make a tea, boil 1/2 teaspoon of crushed seeds in 250 ml (I cup) of water for ten to fifteen minutes, keeping the pot covered during the process. Cool, strain, and then drink three cups per day. As a tincture, 2–4 ml can be taken three times per day.

Safety

No significant adverse effects have been reported. Pregnant or lactating women, as well as anyone with an estrogen-dependent cancer, should avoid fennel in large quantities until the importance of its estrogen-like activity is clarified. It is also recommended that people with a history of alcoholism, hepatitis, or liver disease avoid this herb till a confusing set of findings on the effect of fennel on the liver is clarified. Fennel seeds are quiet safe; but some persons are sensitive to fennel oil. It is found to cause skin rashes. When taken internally, fennel oil may cause nausea, vomiting, and possibly seizures.

Carpenters Square

Name: Figwort.

Biological Name: Scrophularia nodosa Scrophulariaceae.

Other Names: Figwort, Rosenoble, Throatwort, Carpenters Square, Scrofula Plant, figwort root, heal-all, kernelwort.

Parts Used: Aerial parts.

Active Compounds

—Iridoids, *e.g.*, aucubin, harpagide, acetyl harpagide and 6 a-rhamnopyranosylcatalpol.

—Flavonoids; diosmin and hesperidin

—Phenolic acids; ferulic, isoferulic, p-coumaric, caffeic, vanillic & chlorogenic acids.

Remedies For

Alterative, diuretic,laxative, heart stimulant, depurative, anodyne, exanthematous. Figwort is useful in the treatment of skin problems. It helps the body function well, bringing about a state of inner cleanliness. It may be used for eczema, psoriasis and any skin condition where there is itching and irritation. Part of the cleansing occurs due to the purgative and diuretic actions. It may also be used as a mild laxative in constipation. As a heart stimulant, Figwort should be avoided where there is any abnormally rapid

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heartbeat (tachycardia).

Combinations: Figwort combines well with Yellow Dock and Burdock Root in the treatment of skin problems.

Description: A wild plant found in Europe.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–3 teaspoonfuls of the dried leaves and let infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 2–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

CARRAGEENAN

Name: Irish Moss.

Biological Name: Chondrus crispus Rhodophyta.

Other Names: Irish Moss, Carragheen, Carrageenan.

Parts Used: The dried thallus. It is a seaweed.

Active Compounds

Polysaccharides. The extract, also known as carrageenin, consists of sulphated, straight chain galactans. There are two different types, a gelling fraction known as k-carrageenin and a non-gelling fraction known as l-carrageenin. They are both composed of o-galactose and 3,6-anhydrogalactose residues with a high proportion of sulphate esters, but are differentiated by the relative proportions and the number, type and position of the sulphate esters. There is a variety of grades of different molecular weight, including a food grade which has a molecular weight of about 100,000 to 500,000. Vitamin A and Bl.

Remedies For

Expectorant, demulcent, anti-inflammatory.

Traditionally the main use of Irish Moss was in respiratory illness where it is often the core of prescriptions to treat irritating coughs, bronchitis and many other lung problems. It may be used in digestive conditions where a demulcent is called for, such as gastritis and ulceration of the stomach and duodenum.

The soothing activity is also seen in inflammations of the urinary system. It has been used as a food in maintenance diets for diabetes patients.

The primary role of this herb was in speeding recuperation from debilitating illness, especially T. B. and pneumonia. Herbs such as Irish Moss and other tonic nutritive remedies have much to offer in facilitating proper recovery of health.

Recent animal research has shown an anti-viral property against the influenza B and the mumps viruses. This research supports the traditional use of Irish Moss in such conditions. The studies have also confirmed the herb's value in treating ulcers and to use it as an anti-coagulant.

Description: Found in the Atlantic coast of Europe and North America.

Dosage

To use fresh, wash it well and add one cup of Irish Moss to three cups of milk or water and flavor to taste. Simmer slowly until most of the seaweed has dissolved. Remove

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any undissolved fragments and pour into a mould to set.

The dried herb is best made into a decoction. Steeping half an ounce of the dried herb in cold water for 15 minutes and then boiling it for 10–15 minutes in 3 pints of water (or milk). It is then strained and often combined with licorice, lemon, ginger or cinnamon. It may be sweetened to taste.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

CARYOPHYLLUS

Name: Clove.

Biological Name: Caryophyllus aromaticus, Syzygium aromaticum, Eugenia caryophyllata Myrtaceae.

Other Names: Clove, clovos, caryophyllus.

Parts Used: Flower buds.

Active Compounds

Clove oil is 60 to 90 percent eugenol, which is the source of its anesthetic and antiseptic properties.

History

During the Han dynasty (207 B.C. to 220 A.D.) those who addressed the Chinese emperor were required to hold cloves in their mouths to mask bad breath. Traditional Chinese physicians have long used the herb to treat indigestion, diarrhea, hernia, and ringworm, as well as athlete's foot and other fungal infections.

India's traditional Ayurvedic healers have used clove since ancient times to treat respiratory and digestive ailments.

Clove first arrived in Europe around the 4th century A.D. as a highly coveted luxury. The medieval German herbalists used cloves as part of anti-gout mixture. Once clove became easily available in Europe, it was prized as a treatment for indigestion, flatulence, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. It was also used to treat cough, infertility, warts, worms, wounds, and toothache.

Early American Eclectic physicians used clove to treat digestive complaints and added it to bitter herb- medicine preparations to make them more palatable. They were also the first to extract clove oil from the herbal buds. They used it on the gums to relieve toothache. Contemporary herbalists recommend clove for digestive complaints and its oil for toothache.

Remedies For

—Anodyne, antiemetic, antiseptic

Toothache, Oral Hygiene: Dentists use clove oil as an oral anesthetic. They also use it to disinfect root canals.

Antiseptic Uses: Clove oil is the active ingredient in several mouthwash and a number of over-the-counter toothache pain-relief preparations.

Infection Fighter: Clove kills intestinal parasites and exhibits broad antimicrobial properties against fungi and bacteria supporting its traditional use as a treatment for diarrhea, intestinal worms, and other digestive ailments.

Digestive Aid: Like many culinary spices, clove may help relax the smooth muscle lining of the digestive tract. Clove oil will stop the pain of a toothache when dropped into a cavity.

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A few drops of the oil in water will stop vomiting, and clove tea will relieve nausea. Eating cloves is said to be aphrodisiac.

Description

The clove is an evergreen tree, 15 to 30 feet tall, native to the Spice Islands and the Philippines but also grown in India, Sumatra, Jamaica, the West Indies, Brazil, and other tropical areas. It has opposite, ovate leaves more than 5 inches long; and its flowers, when allowed to develop, are red and white, bell-shaped, and grow in terminal clusters. The familiar clove used in the kitchen is the dried flower bud. The fruit is a one- or two-seeded berry.

Dosage

Infusion: Use 1 teaspoon of powdered herb per cup of boiling water. Steep 10 to 20 minutes. Drink up to 3 cups a day.

Medicinal amounts of clove should not be given to children under age 2. For older children and people over 65, start with low-strength preparations and increase strength if necessary. For temporary relief of toothache prior to professional care, dip a cotton swab in clove oil and apply it to the affected tooth and surrounding gum.

Safety

Toothaches require professional care. Clove oil may provide temporary relief, but see a dentist promptly. Japanese researchers have discovered that like many spices, clove contains antioxidants. Antioxidants help prevent the cell damage that scientists believe eventually causes cancer.

On the other hand, in laboratory tests, the chemical eugenol, has been found to be a weak tumor promoter, making clove one of many healing herbs with both pro- and anti-cancer effects. At this point, scientists aren't sure which way the balance tilts. Until they are, anyone with a history of cancer should not use medicinal amounts of clove. For otherwise healthy non-pregnant, non-nursing adults, powdered clove is considered nontoxic.

However, high doses of the oil may cause stomach upset when ingested. When used externally, it may develop a rash. Clove and clove oil in medicinal amounts should be consumed only under the supervision of a qualified professional.

Case Wort

Name: Shephards Purse.

Biological Name: Capsella bursa-pastoris Cruciferae.

Other Names: Shephards Purse, cocowort, shepherd's heart, pickpocket, toywort, pick purse, St. James' weed, St. James' wort, St. Anthony's fire, pepper grass, shepherd's sprout, mother's heart, case wort, permacety.

Parts Used: Aerial parts.

Active Compounds

—Flavonoids; luteolin-7-rutinoside and quercitin-3-rutinoside

—Polypeptides of undetermined structure

—Plant acids; fumaric and bursic acids

—Bases; choline, acetylcholine, histamine, tyramine.

Remedies For

Astringent, diuretic, anti-inflammatory, detergent, vulnerary, styptic.

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Used wherever a gently diuretic is called for, for instance in water retention due to kidney problems. As an astringent it will prove effective in the treatment of diarrhea, wounds, nose bleeds, and other conditions. It has specific use in the stimulation of the menstrual process whilst also being of use in the reduction of excess flow.

Traditionally used for hemorrhage after child birth, and all other internal hemorrhages, bleeding from lungs, fever, kidney complaints, bleeding piles, and hemorrhoids.

Combinations: Combines well with Agrimony, Cranesbill or Periwinkle.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 1- minutes. If it is used for menstrual conditions, it should be drunk every 2–3 hours during and just before the period. Otherwise drink it three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

CASSIA

Name: Cassia.

Biological Name: Cassia tora.

Other Names: Cassia, chakramarda, chakunda, Jue ming zi, cassia seed Takara, Prapanna.

Description

This small plant grows in dry soil in tropical India. It is an Ayurvedic herb. Also used in Chinese medicine.

Parts Used: Leaves, seeds, roots.

Remedies For

Actions: Antipyretic, antibiotic, antihypertensive, cholesterol reducing aid, mild laxative.

Externally: Germicide, antiparasitical.

Internally: Gentle laxative.

Seeds and leaves are used for skin diseases, and leprosy. Leaf decoctions (made by adding 1 part leaves to 10 parts water) given in two ounce doses to children, removes fevers during teething. The herb also eases skin itch and eruptions when it is given mixed with lime juice.

The tender leaves are a very nutritioous and tasty when cooked.

Used as a poultice, warmed leaves reduce gout, sciatica, and joint pains. Seeds are used as a substitute for tea and coffee.

Traditional Chinese Medicine: This herb is especially good for conditions of the eyes. it will brighten them and relieve pain, congestion, itchiness, redness, or sensitivity to light when caused by wind-heat conditions. It can also be used when there is headache along with some of the above conditions in cases of liver yang rising. It is useful when there is either chronic or acute constipation accompanying liver in deficiency. it has been shown to be effective in lowering cholesterol and reducing blood pressure.

Dosage

Decoction, paste, poultice, oil.

6–12 grams

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Safety

Cassia seeds should not be used by those with diarrhea or lethargy and should not be used with cannabis seed.

CATMINT

Name: Catnip.

Biological Name: Nepeta cataria Labiatae (Mint family).

Other Names: Catmint, catnep, catswort, field balm, Catnip.

Parts Used: Flowers and leaves.

Active Compounds

The essential oil in catnip contains a monoterpene similar to the valepotriates found in valerian, an even more widely renowned sedative.

Animal studies (except those involving cats) have found it to increase sleep. The monoterpenes also help with coughs.

History

Catnip is famous for inducing a delirious, stimulated state in cats.

Throughout history, this herb has been used in humans to produce a sedative effect. From Europe to China, catnip had been used medicinally for at least 2000 years. In teas, its pleasant, lemon-minty vapors were considered a cold and cough remedy, relieving chest congestion and loosening phlegm.

Old herbalists also praised its ability to promote sweating, a traditional treatment for fever. Catnip tea was a regular beverage in England before the introduction of tea from China. Several other conditions (including cancer, toothache, corns, and hives) have been treated with catnip by traditional herbalists.

Catnip also has a long history of use as a tranquilizer, sedative, digestive aid, menstruation promoter, and treatment for menstrual cramps, flatulence, and infant colic.

Equal parts of catnip and saffron were once recommended for smallpox and scarlet fever.

The leaves were also chewed for toothache, smoked to treat bronchitis and asthma!

Colonists introduced catnip into North America. It now grows across the continent. The Indians adopted the herb and used it for indigestion and infant colic and as a beverage. Early Americans believed that catnip makes even the kindest person mean. It was traditionally used by hangmen prior to execution "to get into the right mood!"

Remedies For

Used for

—Cough

—Insomnia

Catnip is used as an tranquilizer, sedative, digestive aid, and treatments for colds, colic, diarrhea, flatulence, and fever. Extract of catnip has been found to be cytotoxic to HELA-S3 cancer cells in cell culture.

Digestive Aid: Catnip may soothe the smooth muscles of the digestive tract (making it an antispasmodic). Have a cup of catnip tea after meals if you are prone to indigestion or heartburn.

Women's Health: Antispasmodics calm not only the digestive tract but other smooth tracts as well, such as uterus. Catnip's

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antispasmodic effect supports its traditional use for relieving menstrual cramps. Catnip is also used as a menstruation promoter. Pregnant women should avoid using this herb.

Tranquilizer: Catnip is a mild tranquilizer and sedative.

Infection Prevention: Catnip has some antibiotic properties. It is used for the treatment of diarrhea and fever.

Description

Catnip is a gray green aromatic perennial that grows to 3 feet and bears all the hallmarks of the mint family, a square stem, fuzzy leaves, and twin-lipped flowers. The oblong or cordate, pointed leaves have scalloped edges and gray or whitish hairs on the lower side. The flowers are white with purple spots and grow in spikes from June to September.

Dosage

A catnip tea can be made by adding 250 ml (1 cup) of boiling water to 1–2 teaspoons of the herb; cover, then steep for ten to fifteen minutes.

Do not boil catnip. Boiling dissipates its healing oil.

Drink 2–3 cups per day.

For children with coughs, 5 ml of tincture three times per day can be used.

Safety

No adverse side effects were reported if used in reasonable quantities or doses. Some people may experience upset stomach. FDA classifies catnip as a drug of "undefined safety". No significant toxic reactions have ever been reported.

Cat's Claw

Name: Cat's Claw.

Biological Name: Uncaria tomentosa.

Other Names: Cat's Claw, Una de Gato.

Parts Used: Root bark.

Active Compounds

Oxyindole alkaloids appear to give cat's claw much of its activity, particularly to stimulate the immune system. The alkaloids and other constituents, such as glycosides, may account for the anti-inflammatory and antioxidant actions of this herb. Although cat's claw has become very popular in North America and is used for cancer and HIV, there is little scientific evidence to support the use of cat's claw for these conditions.

History

Cat's claw has been reportedly used by indigenous peoples in the Andes to treat inflammation, rheumatism, gastric ulcers, tumors, dysentery, and as birth control. Cat's claw is popular in South American folk medicine for intestinal complaints, gastric ulcers, arthritis, and to promote wound healing.

Remedies For

Useful for

—Immune function

—Inflammation

—Minor Injuries

Description

Cat's Claw grows in the rain forests of the Andes mountains in South America, particularly in Peru. The root bark is used as medicine.

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Dosage

A cat's claw tea is prepared from 1 gram of root bark by adding 250 ml (1 cup) of water and boiling for ten to fifteen minutes. After cooling and straining, one cup is drunk three times per day. Alternatively, 1–2 ml of tincture can be taken up to two times per day, or 20–60 mg of a standardized dry extract can be taken per day.

Safety

No serious adverse effects have yet been reported. Cat's claw is contraindicated in autoimmune illness, multiple sclerosis, and tuberculosis. European practitioners avoid combining this herb with hormonal drugs, insulin, or vaccines. Cat's claw, until proven safe, should be taken only with great caution by pregnant or lactating women.

Cat's Foot

Name: Cat's Foot.

Biological Name: Antennaria dioica.

Other Names: Mountain everlasting, Cat's Foot.

Description

Cat's foot is a small perennial plant found growing in large patches in the mountains of the Pacific coast states of the USA and in both mountains and flatlands of Europe.

It forms a mat of rosettes of narrow spatula- to lance-shaped leaves, dark green above but white-woolly on the undersides.

In summer strong 8 in tall flower stems develop bearing clusters of white, pink or yellow flowerheads. The flowers grow in cymose clusters, the white male flowers having a filiform corolla, the rose- colored female flowers a tubular, 5-toothed corolla. Flowers appear from May to August.

Parts Used: The flowering herb.

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES

Action

Cholagogue.

Uses

Cat's foot is useful for chronic problems with the biliary passages. It is also said to stimulate the flow of gastric juices and pancreatic secretions, and to raise blood pressure. It is sometimes recommended for dysentery, but better remedies are available.

Dosage

Infusion: Use 1 tsp. fresh or dried flowering herb with 1/2 cup boiling water; steep for 10 minutes. Take 1/2 to 1 cup a day.

Celery

Name: Celery.

Biological Name: Apium graveolens Umbelliferae.

Other Names: Celery, Celery Seeds, Smallage, Garden celery, wild celery.

Parts Used: Dried ripe fruits, Root, leaves.

Active Compounds

—Volatile oil, containing d-limonene, with a-selinene, santalol, a- and b-eudesmol, dihydrocarvone.

—Phthalides; mainly 3-n-butylphthalide, ligustilide, sedanolide, and sedanenolide.

—Coumarins; bergapten, isoimperatorin, isopimpinellin, apiumoside & celeroside.o Flavonoids; apiin and apigenin

—Fixed oil, fatty acids.

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Remedies For

Seeds: Anti-rheumatic, anti-inflammatory, diuretic, carminative, anti-spasmodic, nervine, sedative.

Plant: Appetizer, diuretic, emmenagogue.

The expressed juice of the plant, particularly the fleshy petioles, is the most effective form of medicine. It can be used for dropsy, rheumatic tendencies, gout, tendencies toward overweight, flatulence, chronic pulmonary catarrh, lack of appetite, and deficiency diseases. it is a strong diuretic which is not to be used when acute kidney problems exist (moderate use is allowable when kidney problems are chronic).

Celery also promotes the onset of menstruation; take it only in moderate amounts during pregnancy. As a salad vegetable or made into a tea, celery can be helpful also in clearing up skin problems. A decoction of the seeds can be used for bronchitis, rheumatism, and as a sedative for nervousness. A yellowish oil extracted from the root can restore sexual potency impaired by illness.

Indications: Treatment of rheumatism, arthritis and gout. Rheumatoid arthritis where there is an associated mental depression. Their diuretic action is involved in rheumatic conditions. Also used as a urinary antiseptic, largely because of the volatile oil apiol.

In rheumatic conditions celery seeds combine well with Bogbean. They also appear to work better in combination with Dandelion.

Description

Celery is a widely cultivated, biennial plant which also grows wild in salty soils of North and South America, Europe, and Africa. The fleshy, bulbous root sends up, in the second year, an angular, furrowed, branched stem from 1 to 3 feet high. Celery leaves are opposite, dark green, shiny, and pinnate, the leaflets wedge-shaped, incised, coarsely toothed.

The white to gray- white flowers bloom from July to November. The fruit is a small, ribbed, elliptic-ovate seed.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of freshly crushed seeds. Leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Decoction: Use 1/2 tsp. seeds with ½ cup of water; boil briefly and strain.

Juice: Take 1 tbsp., two or three times a day, an hour before meals. An electric vegetable juicer makes fresh celery juice easy to extract. Mixes well with-carrot and apple juice. Due to its high sodium content, use less than you do of the carrots and apples, if blood pressure is high.

Oil: Take 6 to 8 drops in water, two times a day

Tincture: 1–4 ml three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Chaenomeles Fruit

Name: Chinese quince.

Biological Name: Chaenomelis speciosa Rosaceae.

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Other Names: Chinese quince, chaenomeles fruit, mu gua.

Parts Used: Fruit.

Remedies For

Antirheumatic, anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, digestive, antiemetic.

Promotes circulation, moves blood and qi, relaxes the muscles and tendons, dispels dampness, harmonizes the stomach. It is used for arthritic and rheumatic conditions, especially of the legs, and to relieve food stagnation in the stomach.

Dosage

3–9 grams.

Safety

Chinese quince should not be used by those with a in deficiency. It should also be avoided in exterior conditions.

CHAMOMILE

Latin Name: Matricaria chamomilla.

A Remedy For

—Bronchitis

—Colds

—Cough

—Fever

—Skin inflammation

—Sore throat

—Tendency to infection

—Wounds and burns

Chamomile is also used internally to treat inflammation and spasms of the digestive tract. As a mouth rinse, it's used for sore gums and oral inflammation. As a bath additive, it combats irritated skin.

What It Is; Why It Works

This traditional home remedy is native to Europe and northwest Asia, and now grows in North America and elsewhere as well. A small plant (8 to 16 inches in height), it sports little white and yellow flowers.

The entire flowering plant, or the flowers alone, may be used medicinally. The herb has pronounced anti-inflammatory activity, promotes wound healing, combats certain bacteria on the skin, and has a mild tranquilizing effect.

Clinical trials of a Chamomile cream have confirmed its ability to relieve skin inflammations as effectively as certain steroid creams.

Avoid If...

Do not use Chamomile if you have an allergy to another member of this plant family (including arnica, artemisia, feverfew, tansy, and yarrow).

Special Cautions

Try Chamomile cautiously if you have hay fever or asthma; it has been known to trigger a severe allergic reaction under these conditions. It can also cause allergic skin reactions when used externally.

Possible Drug Interactions

Chamomile could add to the blood-thinning effect of Coumadin and similar drugs. Because of its tranquilizing properties, it's best to avoid combining it with alcohol and anti-anxiety drugs such as Ativan, Valium, and Xanax.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

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How to Prepare

Chamomile Tea: Pour 5 ounces (about one-half cup) of boiling water over 3 grams (about 3 teaspoonfuls) of Chamomile. Cover for 5 to 10 minutes and strain.

Chamomile Compress: Pour 1-1/2 cups of hot water over 2 teaspoonfuls of Chamomile. Cover, steep for 15 minutes, then strain. Soak a cloth in the lukewarm water and apply to the affected skin throughout the day.

Bath Dditive: Mix about 16 tablespoonfuls of Chamomile with 1 quart of water and add to the bath.

Chamomile ointments and gels may be used externally throughout the day.

Typical Dosage

The usual oral dosage is 10 to 15 grams (approximately 3 to 5 tablespoonfuls) daily.

CHANDANA

Name: Sandalwood.

Biological Name: Santalum album Santalaceae.

Other Names: Sandalwood, Chandana, White sandalwood, white saunders, yellow sandalwood, Chandan, Chandanam, Safed Chandan, Srigandha.

Description

Sandalwood is a small tree that grows primarily in India. The wood of its stem, which grows from 20 to 30 feet high, is heavy and straight-grained and varies in color from white when young to yellow or orange when older.

Its oval leaves are covered with a whitish bloom; its small flowers, varying in color, grow in numerous cymes.

Parts Used: Wood and volatile oil.

Active Compounds

The essential oil contains high amounts of alpha- and beta-santalol. These small molecules possess antibacterial and sedative properties. Synthetic sandalwood does not contain the active ingredients.

History

Sandalwood oil was used traditionally to treat skin diseases, acne, dysentery, gonorrhea, and a number of other conditions.1 In traditional Chinese medicine, sandalwood oil is considered an excellent sedating agent.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action

Alterative, antibacterial, antiseptic, astringent, carminative, disinfectant, diuretic, expectorant, hemostatic, refrigerant, sedative, stimulant.

Uses

Sandalwood is used for:

—acute dermatitis

—bronchitis

—cystitis

—eye diseases

—gonorrhea

—herpes zoster

—infection

—palpitations

—sunstroke

—urethritis

—vaginitis

The medicinal properties of sandalwood reside in the oil, which can be pressed from

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the wood or extracted with alcohol or water. The antiseptic and disinfectant properties of this oil are similar to those of cubeb oil. The oil can also be used for bronchitis and for inflammation in mucous tissue. A decoction of the wood may be helpful for indigestion and fever and externally for skin problems, especially those of bacterial origin.

Sandalwood cools and calms the entire body and mind. It affects the circulatory, digestive, respiratory and nervous systems.

It relieves fever, thirst, burning sensation and stops sweating. It is good for fever or overexposure to the sun.

Sandalwood is good for most of inflammatory conditions and for cleansing the blood. The oil or paste is useful for most infectious sores or ulcers if applied externally.

Sandalwood helps the awakening of intelligence. It also aids in the transmutation of sexual energy.

Dosage

Infusion (hot or cold), decoction, powder (250 mg to 1 g), medicated oil.

Decoction: Boil 1 heaping tsp. wood in I cup water. Take 1 to 2 cups a day, a mouthful at a time.

Tincture: A dose is from 20 to 40 drops.

Typically, a few drops of sandalwood oil are dissolved in water, and the infected area of skin is then soaked in the solution, or the diluted oil is applied directly.

Safety

Some people may experience severe lung congestion.

Some people may experience mild skin irritation from topical application of sandalwood oil. No other information about the safety of this herb is available.

Use Caution: Ayurvedic herbs are often taken in combination with others to neutralize the toxicity one herb with the opposing effect of other. Do not take except under the supervision of a qualified professional.

Che Qian Zi

Name: Plantain seed.

Biological Name: Semen plantaginis Plantaginaceae.

Other Names: Plantain seed, Che qian zi.

Parts Use: Seed.

Remedies For

Anti-inflammatory, antitussive, antidiarrheal, diuretic, expectorant, lowers blood pressure

Drains dampness, clears heat, brightens the eyes, resolves phlegm. Useful for urinary tract infections; scanty, painful, and/or frequent urination; dysentery; yellow phlegm in the lungs; conjunctivitis; blurred vision; photophobia; and cataracts caused by liver in deficiency.

Dosage 3–9 grams.

Combinations

For Urinary Tract Infections: Combine 9 grams each of plantain seeds, alisma, and gardenia fruit and 30 grams of talcum.

For Diarrhea and Dysentery Caused by Damp Heat: Combine 9 grams each of plantain seeds, poria, alisma, and atractylodes.

For Eyesight Problems, Blurred Vision, Photophobia, and Cataracts: Combine 9 grams of plantain seeds, 12 grams of unprepared rehmannia, 9 grams of lycii

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berries, and 9 grams of chrysanthemum.

For Cough with Yellow Mucus Caused by Heat in the Lungs: Combine 9 grams each of plantain seeds, trichosanthes, bamboo shavings, scutellaria, and fritillaria.

Safety

Plantain seed should not be used in pregnancy, constipation, or deficiency of qi or without signs of damp heat.

CHECKERBERRY

Name: Partridge Berry.

Biological Name: Mitchella repens Rubiaceae.

Other Names: Partridge Berry, Squaw Vine, checkerberry, deerberry, winter clover, twin-berry, one-berry, hive vine, squawberry, patridgeberry.

Parts Used: Aerial parts.

Active Compounds

Saponins, mucilage. Largely unknown. Unspecified alkaloids, glycosides, tannins and mucilages have been reported.

Remedies For

Parturient, emmenagogue, diuretic, astringent, tonic, alterative.

Partridge Berry is among the best remedies for preparing the uterus and whole body for child birth. Take for some weeks before the child is due, thus ensuring a safe and wonderful birth for both of you. Used also for the relief of painful periods. As an astringent it has been used in the treatment of colitis, especially if there is much mucus.

Useful for all forms of nervous feebleness and irritability of a chronic character. Exerts a highly favorable influence over spermatorrhea, especially in combination with the flowers of Althea, Celastrus, and Uva ursi. On the mucous membranes it exerts a mild tonic influence, which slowly abates excessive mucous discharges, and has led most herbalists to pronounce it an astringent; but this action is wholly tonic, and may be used for catarrhal and leucorrheal discharges, as well as for chronic dysentery.

Combinations: As parturient to prepare for childbirth it may be used with Raspberry Leaves. For dysmenorrhoea it could be combined with Cramp Bark and Pasque Flower.

Description: Native of North America.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1 teaspoonful of the herb and let infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety: No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

CHEESE RENNET

Name: Bedstraw.

Biological Name: Galium verum.

Other Names: Yellow bed- straw, cheese rennet, curdwort, lady's bedstraw, maid's hair, yellow cleavers.

Parts Used: The herb.

Remedies For

Yellow bedstraw is used essentially like

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cleavers, its activity being perhaps somewhat stronger. In addition, yellow bedstraw tea has been recommended for epilepsy and dropsy, and as a calmative.

Description

Yellow bedstraw is found in dry fields of the north- eastern U.S. and in pastures and meadows in Europe. The slender, square, smooth stern grows from 6 inches to 3 feet high and bears linear, bristle-tipped leaves in whorls of 6 or S. From May to September, tiny yellow flowers appear In dense panicles.

Dosage

Infusion: Steep I tbsp. dried herb in 1/2 cup water. Take 1 cup a day, freshly made each time.

Juice: Take 1 tsp. in 1/2 cup hot water over the course of a day.

CHERVIL

Name: Chervil.

Biological Name: Anthriscus cerefolium.

Other Names: Chervil.

Parts Used: Flowering herb.

Remedies For

Digestive, diuretic, expectorant, stimulant.

The juice pressed out of the fresh flowering herb is popularly used for various purposes, including scrofula, eczema, gout stones, abscesses, dropsy, and women's abdominal complain. The infusion is popularly used in Europe to lower blood pressure.

Description

Chervil is an annual plant cultivated in many places as a kitchen spice. The round, finely grooved, branched stem grows 12 to 26 inches high from a thin, whitish root. The leaves are opposite, light green, and bipinnate, the lower leaves petioled, the upper sessile on stem sheaths. The small, white flowers grow from May to July. The elongated, segmented seeds ripen in August and September.

Dosage

Infusion: Use I tsp. fresh or dry herb with 1/2 cup water. Take 1/2 to 1 cup a day, unsweetened, a mouthful at a time.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

CHESTNUT

Latin Name: Castanea sativa.

Other Names: Spanish Chestnut, Sweet Chestnut.

A Remedy For

Chestnut leaf is used as a remedy for poor circulation and upper respiratory disorders such as cough, sore throat, and bronchitis. In homeopathic medicine, it's prescribed for diarrhea, low back pain, and whooping cough. There is no evidence, however, that supports its effectiveness for any of these problems.

What It Is; Why It Works

Chestnut trees grow in northern, temperate regions near the coast. Once fed to the pigs in England, Chestnuts provide the French with the delicacy known as "marrons glace's." Although the Chestnut leaf is used as a remedy, there is no information on its medicinal actions, if any.

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Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Chestnut.

Special Cautions

At customary dosage levels, Chestnut poses no threat.

Possible Drug Interactions

There are no known drug interactions with Chestnut.

Special Information If You are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No information is available.

How to Prepare

Chestnut is available in crushed-leaf and liquid-extract form.

To make a tea, pour boiling water over 5 grams (about 1 teaspoonful) crushed leaf and strain.

Typical Dosage

Doses of both the leaf and the liquid extract are typically 5 grams (1 teaspoonful).

Strengths of commercial preparations may vary. Follow the manufacturer's labeling whenever available.

Chicken's Toes

Name: Coral root.

Biological Name: Corallorhiza odontorhiza.

Other Names: Coral root, Chicken's toes, crawley, dragon's claw, fever root, scaly dragon's claw, turkey claw.

Parts Used: Roots.

Remedies For

Diaphoretic, febrifuge, sedative.

Coral root is an effective remedy for fevers, cramps, and skin diseases. Because of its relative scarcity, it is often combined with other herbs. The tea can be used internally or externally. For insomnia, take the tea before going to bed.

Description

Coral root is a native American, perennial plant that grows around the roots of trees in dry woodlands in the USA. The dark brown, branched, toothed, coral-like underground rootstocks send up simple scapes with sheaths instead of leaves and with terminal racemes of 3 to 20 flowers.

The hood-like flowers are reddish or purplish on the outside, paler and flecked with purple lines on the inside. One petal forms a white lip with purple spots and a purple rim. Flowers appear from August to October.

Dosage

Infusion: Steep 1 tsp. rootstock in 1 cup water. Take hot or cold, 1 to 2 cups a day.

Tincture: Take 10 to 20 drops at a time.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Chicory

Name: Chicory.

Biological Name: Cichorium intybus.

Other Names: Chicory, Succory, wild chicory, wild succory, garden endive, garden chicory, endive.

Parts Used: Root, flowering herb.

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Remedies For

Appetizer, cholagogue, digestive, diuretic, tonic.

Chicory is often recommended for jaundice and or spleen problems. The juice of the leaves and a tea made from the flowering plant promote the production of bile, the release of gallstones, and the elimination of excessive internal mucus.

They are also useful for gastritis, lack of appetite, and digestive difficulties. A decoction of the rootstock is said to be beneficial to the glandular organs of the digestive system. For painful inflammations, try applying the boiled leaves and flowers wrapped in a cloth.

Description

Chicory is a perennial plant that is commonly cultivated and also found wild in the U.S. and Europe. The rootstock is light yellow outside, white inside, and, like the rest of the plant, contains a bitter, milky juice.

The stiff, angular, branching stem bears lanceolate leaves that are coarsely toothed near the bottom of the plant. The light-blue to violet-blue, flower heads feature rays that are toothed at the ends. Flowering time is from July to September or October.

Dosage

Gather the rootstock from March to May.

Decoction: Use 1 tsp. rootstock or herb per 1/2 cup of cold water; bring to a boil and strain. Take 1 to 1 1/2 cups a day, a mouthful at a time.

Juice: Take 1 tbsp. in milk or water, three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

China Orange

Latin Name: Citrus sinensis.

Other Names: Citrus Dulcis, Sweet Orange.

A Remedy For

—Appetite loss

—Indigestion

What It Is; Why It Works

The outer peel of this particular variety of orange has a calming effect on the stomach. Like other citrus trees, China Orange originated in Asia, but is now cultivated in subtropical regions worldwide. The plant was probably brought to Europe by Arab invaders.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of China Orange.

Special Cautions

At customary dosage levels, China Orange poses no dangers.

Possible Drug Interactions

No drug interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Use only the fruit's outer rind; discard the white pith layer below it. The peel can be used fresh or dried.

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Typical Dosage

China Orange is taken orally. The usual daily dosage is 10 to 15 grams (2 to 3 teaspoonfuls).

China Root

Name: Wild Yam.

Biological Name: Dioscorea villosa Dioscoriaceae.

Other Names: Wild Yam, Colic Root, Rheumatism Root, China root, yuma, devil's bones.

Parts Used: Dried underground parts.

Active Compounds

Steroidal saponins, based on diosgenin: dioscin, dioscorin, and others.

Remedies For

Anti-spasmodic, anti-inflammatory, anti-rheumatic, hepatic, cholagogue, diaphoretic, antibilious.

This valuable herb was at one time the sole source of the chemicals that were used as the raw materials for contraceptive hormone manufacture. In herbal medicine Wild Yam is a remedy that can be used to relieve intestinal colic, to soothe diverticulitis, ease dysmenorrhoea and ovarian and uterine pains. It is of great use in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, especially the acute phase where there is intense inflammation.

Traditional herbalists recommend this herb Forbilious colic; other forms of colic with spasmodic contractions; yellow skin and conjunctiva, with nausea and colicky pains; tongue coated, paroxysmal abdominal pain, and a stomach deranged; frequent small, flatulent, alvine passages; colic, with tenderness on pressure; sharp abdominal pain, made worse by motion.

Combinations: To relieve intestinal colic it may be combined with Calamus, Chamomile and Ginger. For rheumatoid arthritis it may be used with Black Cohosh.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the herb in a cup of water, bring to the boil and simmer gently for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 2–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety:

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Chinese Catnip

Name: Schizonepeta.

Biological Name: Seuflos schizonepetae tenuifolia Labiatae.

Other Names: Schizonepeta, Jing jie, Chinese catnip.

Parts Used: Leaves and flowers.

Remedies For

Diaphoretic, hemostatic, vents skin rashes, anti-inflammatory.

Relieves wind cold, antispasmodic. Can be used for the onset of the common cold and influenza when they are accompanied by a headache and sore throat. Also used for hastening the ripening and termination of eruptive skin diseases, such as measles and abscesses, as well as to alleviate itching.

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Also useful for blood in stools or uterine bleeding.

Dosage

3-9 grams.

Safety

Schizonepeta should not be taken by those with spontaneous sweating or with liver wind signs, such as headache, especially when there is a in deficiency. It should not be used for full-blown skin diseases.

Chinese Chives

Name: Chives.

Biological Name: Allium schoenoprasum, Allium tuberosum, Allium schoenoprasum sibericum Liliaceae.

Other Names: Chives, Chinese chives, garlic chives, Siberian chives.

Parts Used: Fresh leaves.

Remedies For

Appetizer, digestive.

Chives help to stimulate appetite and to promote the digestive processes. The plant also contains iron and arsenic (in harmless amounts) and may therefore be helpful for anemia.

Used mainly for flavoring and garnishing where a mild onion flavor is required. High in vitamin C.

Description

Chive is a widespread perennial plant, both cultivated and wild. It grows to a height of 8 to 12 inches from a small, elongated, bulbous root. The leaves are hollow, cylindrical, closed at the top and dilated to surround the stem at the bottom.

The otherwise naked stem bears a terminal globose cluster of reddish-blue or purple flowers in June and July. The fruit is a three-sided black seed.

Dosage

Always use fresh, and avoid subjecting to heat (such as boiling with soup). The common method of chopping it fresh and sprinkling it over food just prior to serving is best.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Chinese Cinnamon

Latin Name: Cinnamomum aromaticum.

Other Names: Bastard Cinnamon, Cassia, False Cinnamon.

A Remedy For

—Appetite loss

—Bronchitis

—Colds

—Cough

—Fever

—Indigestion

—Sore throat

—Tendency to infection

This herb is also used to treat exhaustion and promote weight gain; and in Chinese medicine, it has been used for impotence, diarrhea, bed-wetting, rheumatism, testicle hernia, failure to menstruate, and symptoms of menopause. Its effectiveness for these conditions, however, remains unconfirmed.

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What It Is; Why It Works

A common household spice, Chinese Cinnamon is cultivated in southern China, Vietnam, and Burma. The flowers, young twigs, and the bark of thin branches are all considered medicinal. Researchers have found that the active agents in Chinese Cinnamon exhibit antibacterial properties, control the growth of fungi, boost immunity in animals, improve intestinal activity, and inhibit ulcers.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Chinese Cinnamon.

Special Cautions

No side effects are likely when this herb is used at customary dosage levels. However, some people develop a sensitivity to the herb.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Chinese Cinnamon has a potentially abortive effect. Do not use it during pregnancy.

How to Prepare

—Chinese Cinnamon is available as crushed bark, in solutions of alcohol, and as an essential oil.

—Typical Dosage

Herb: The average dose is 1 gram (less than one-quarter teaspoonful). Take 2 to 4 grams daily.

Essential Oil: 50 to 200 milligrams daily.

Store Chinese Cinnamon in cool, dry conditions in well-sealed containers.

Chinese Figwort

Name: Scrophularia.

Biological Name: Scrophulariae ningpoensis Scrophulariaceae.

Other Names: Scrophularia, Xuan shen, Chinese figwort.

Parts Used: Root.

Remedies For

Anti-inflammatory, antihypertensive, antibacterial, antifungal, vasodilator.

Nourishes the yin, relieves irritability and constipation. Chinese figwort is used when there are warm febrile diseases possibly associated with bleeding.

It is especially helpful for swollen, inflamed lymph glands and severe sore throat. It is also useful for the treatment of cancers and tumors.

Dosage

9-30 grams.

Safety

Scrophularia should not be used by those with spleen or stomach weakness or dampness, especially when there is diarrhea.

CAUTION: Scrophularia should not be used with Radix veratri.

Chinese Foxglove

Name: Rehmannia Root.

Biological Name: Rehmanniae glutinosae Scrophulariaceae.

Other Names: Rehmannia root, raw rehmannia, Chinese foxglove, Sheng di huang.

Parts Used: Root.

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Remedies For

Antibacterial, antifungal, cardiotonic, diuretic. Raw rehmannia is used in cases of heat caused by lack of fluids (yin deficiency) in the body. It is used when there are heat signs with thirst. It is also recommended when there is bleeding in the stomach or uterus. Rehmannia is also effective when there is heart fire rising with sores in the mouth or on the tongue, irritability, insomnia, and/or chronic low-grade fever.

Dosage

9-30 grams.

Safety

Rehmannia root should not be used for spleen weakness with symptoms of diarrhea, lack of appetite, or excess phlegm. it should also be avoided by pregnant women.

Chinese Foxglove Root

Latin Name: Rehmannia glutinosa.

A Remedy For

In China, this herb is often recommended for insomnia, restlessness, night sweats, chronic fever, and hot flashes. It's also considered a remedy for menstrual irregularity and uterine bleeding, especially after childbirth, and is taken for light-headedness, palpitations, stiff joints, low back pain, constipation, blurred vision, and hearing problems. Its effectiveness remains to be verified.

What It Is; Why It Works

In Chinese medicine, this thick, reddish yellow root is often cooked in wine and used as a tonic for the effects of aging. Its mode of action is unknown.

Avoid If...

People with digestive problems, especially those with a tendency to develop gas or bloating, should use Chinese Foxglove carefully; the cooked root can distend the abdomen and cause loose stools.

Special Cautions

Side effects may include diarrhea, nausea, and abdominal pain. To prevent these problems, Chinese herbalists frequently include in their Chinese Foxglove preparations an additive called "grains-of-paradise fruit."

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Both the cooked root and the raw version can be found in Chinese pharmacies, Asian markets, and some Western health food stores.

Typical Dosage

There are no formal guidelines on record. Chinese medical practitioners often use Chinese Foxglove as part of various therapeutic combinations.

Chinese Gentian

Name: Chinese gentian.

Biological Name: Gentianae longdancao Gentianaceae.

Other Names: Chinese gentian, gentian, Long dan cao, gentian root.

Parts Used: Root.

Remedies For

Cholagogue, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory,

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antispasmodic. This herb is used for inflammatory conditions associated with jaundice, itching, herpes virus, leukorrhea, venereal diseases, hepatitis, cholecystitis, and hypertension. Symptoms can include fever, headache, restlessness, abdominal pain, sore throat, bitter mouth taste, flank pain, and redness of the conjunctiva of the eyes.

Description

Chinese herb.

Dosage

3-9 grams.

Safety

This herb should not be used by those with diarrhea caused by spleen/stomach deficiency or by persons without true damp heat symptoms.

Chinese Parsley

Name: Coriander.

Biological Name: Coriandrum sativum Umbelliferae.

Other Names: Coriander, Cilantro, Dhania, Dhanyak, Chinese Parsley, Hu Sui, Coriander cultive, Dhana, Dhane, Dhano, Dhanyaka, Gemeiner coriander, Haveeja, Kishniz, Koriyun, Kotambri-beeja, Kothimbir, Kotimiri, Kottamalli, Kottampalari, Kottmir, Kottumbari, Kushniz, Kustumbari, Kusbara, Nau-nau.

Parts Used: Seeds, leaves, oil.

Description

Coriander is a small annual plant that has been cultivated for several millenniums and is still grown in North and South America, Europe and the Mediterranean countries. The round, finely grooved stem grows almost 2 feet tall from a thin, spindly-shaped root.

The flowers appear in flat, compound umbels that may be either white or red in appearance. The brownish seeds have a disagreeable smell until they ripen, at which time they acquire a distinctly spicy aroma.

Characteristics: The fresh herb and unripe fruit has a bug-like smell, ripe fruit has a pleasant tangy smell and taste.

History

Coriander has been used as a flavoring and medicine since ancient times.

Seeds have been found in the tombs of Pharohs, and the Roman legions carried coriander as they progressed through Europe, using it to flavor their bread.

Constituents

Volatile Oil: chief components D-(+)-linalool (coriandrol), including among others borneol, p-cymene, camphor, geraniol, limonene, alpha-pinenes, the unusual smell is caused by the trans-tridec-2-enale content.

Fatty Oil: chief fatty acids petroselic acid, oleic acid, linolenic acid.

Hydroxycoumarins: including umbelliferone, scopoletine.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action

The fruits of coriander are: alterative, antibilious, antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, appetizer, aromatic, carminative, diaphoretic, diuretic, refrigerant, stimulant, stomachic, tonic.

Fresh leaves are pungent and aromatic. The essential oil of coriander stimulates the

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secretion of gastric juices and is a carminative and spasmolytic; in vitro it has antibacterial and antifungal effects.

Uses

—Dyspeptic complaints

—Loss of appetite

Coriander is used for dyspeptic complaints, loss of appetite, and complaints of the upper abdomen.

Coriander is also used traditionally for digestive and gastric complaints as well as for coughs, chest pains, bladder complaints, leprosy rash, fever, dysentery, externally for headaches, oral and pharyngeal disorders, halitosis, and post- partal complications.

Coriander can be applied externally for rheumatism and painful joints. It improves the flavor of other medicinal preparations. At one time it was believed to have aphrodisiac effects.

Chinese herbalists use coriander seeds to treat indigestion, anorexia, and stomachache. Chinese herbalists suggests that coriander herb can be used to treat influenza in which there is no sweating.

Chinese Folk medicine uses coriander leaves and seeds to help remove unpleasant odors occurring in the genital areas of men and women, as well as halitosis or bad breath. See the dosage recommendations and preparations below.

Coriander Seed Oil had many medicinal uses. It has antibacterial properties and is used to treat colic, neuralgia, and rheumatism. The oil counteracts unpleasant odors in pharmaceutical preparations and tobacco. It is also used in perfumes, liqueurs and gin.

Coriander seeds are ground into a paste for application to skin and mouth ulcers. Before the invention of toothpaste, coriander seeds were chewed as a breath sweetener.

Coriander oil is very useful in flatulent colic, rheumatism, neuralgia etc. Recommended dose is from 1 to 4 minims on sugar or in emulsion.

The dried fruit of cardamom (generally used as infusion or decoction) is useful for the treatment of sore-throat, flatulence, indigestion, vomiting, other intestinal disorders, common catarrh and bilious complaints.

Coriander is used in several Ayurvedic Remedies: Dhana-ni-dala Remedy: This remedy is useful as a digestive, carminative and stomachic.

Coriander Digestive Mix: This remedy is great as a digestive aid.

Hijir-ul-Yahud: This remedy is useful in diseases of genito-urinary system, chordee, etc.

Coriander Poppy Seed Remedy: This remedy is useful for vertigo.

Dosage

Cilantro juice, infusions (hot and cold), powder

Infusion: Steep 2 tsp. Dried seeds in 1 cup water. Take 1 cup a day.

Powder: Take 1/4 to 1/2 tsp. at a time.

Preparation to eliminate genital odors and bad breath:

Bring 2 quarts of water to a rolling boil. Reduce heat and add 3-1/2 tbsp. of seed. Simmer for 1 1/2 hours until the amount has been reduced to slightly less than a

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quart of liquid. Add 2 tsp. fresh, finely grated orange peel and one pitted, finely chopped date. Simmer for an additional 15 minutes. Remove from heat entirely. Add I tsp. each of dried coriander leaf and finely chopped fresh parsley, with a drop or two of peppermint oil or wintergreen oil (optional).

Steep the mixture for about half an hour, stirring occasionally. Strain through a fine sieve or filter paper and store in a pint fruit jar with lid to seal it. Store in refrigerator until needed.

When using for genital problems, warm up a portion and rub all around genital area. Dry in the air. Or gargle and rinse mouth with 1/2 cup while cool, but not heated.

Also very good to hold in the mouth or soak cotton with and insert to relieve toothache.

Safety

Precautions: Not to be used in extreme vayu nerve tissue deficiency. The herb possesses a weak potential for sensitization.

No other information available.

Chinese Pink Flower

Name: Dianthus.

Biological Name: Herba dianthi Caryophyllaceae.

Other Names: Dianthus, Chinese pink flower, Qu mai.

Parts Used: Whole plant.

Remedies For

Diuretic, antibacterial, antiparasitic, stimulates peristalsis, lowers blood pressure.

Drains dampness, clears heat, promotes urination. It is indicated for genitourinary tract infections associated with damp heat, with painful and difficult urination, and possibly with blood. It can be used for damp heat associated with constipation or cessation of menses due to blood stagnation.

Dosage

6–12 grams.

Combinations: For urinary tract infections, combine 9 grams each of dianthus, plantain seeds, polyporus, and poria, 6 grams of cinnamon twigs, and 20 grams of talcum.

For amenorrhea, combine 9 grams each of dianthus, peach seed, safflower, and leonurus.

Safety

Dianthus should not be used by pregnant women or by those with deficiency of kidney or spleen qi.

Chinese Skullcap

Name: Scutellaria.

Biological Name: Scutellariae baicalensis Labiatae.

Other Names: Scutellaria, Huang Qin, Scute, Chinese skullcap.

Parts Used: Root.

Remedies For

Anti-inflammatory, antibiotic, cholagogue, antihypertensive, calmative.

A primary herb for damp heat conditions, especially of the upper body. It is indicated for symptoms of yellow phlegm, including phlegm with blood, diarrhea, dysentery, jaundice, urinary tract infections, and skin diseases. It can be used during pregnancy

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to help calm fetal restlessness. Scute, as it is commonly called, is excellent for liver yang rising (hypertension) with symptoms of irritability, red eyes, and flushed face.

Description: Chinese herb.

Dosage

3–9 grams.

Safety

Scutellaria should not be used by those with deficiency heat in the lungs or with diarrhea. It should not be used by those mothers with restless fetus due to cold conditions.

CHIRAYATA

Name: Chirayata.

Biological Name: Swertia chirata, Gentiana chirayita Gentianaceae.

Other Names: Chirayata, Kirata-tikta, Kiryat-charayatah.

Bhunimba, Bhuchiretta, Charayatah, Chiretta, Chiraita, Indian Gentian, Jwaran-thakah, Kirata, kiraita, Kiriath, Kiriyattu, Kiryat-charayatah, Mahatita, Nila-vemu, Nila-vembu, Qasabuz-Zarirah.

Description

This herb is indigenous to temperate Himalayas at altitudes above 4000 feet from Kashmir, Nepal and Bhutan. It is sometimes found in other parts or India. Tinnevelly 'nilavembu' is the best form of the herb.

Parts Used: Leaves and whole plant.

Constituents

This herb contains two bitter principles:

—Ophelic acid, an amorphous bitter principle

—chiratin a yellow bitter glucoside

Other constituents are:

—resins

—gum

—carbonates and phosphates of potash

—lime and magnesia

—ash 4 to 6 p.c.

It contain no tannin.

MEDICINAL USES

Action

Bitter tonic, stomachic, febrifuge and anthelmintic, appetizer, laxative, alterative, antidiarrhoeic and antiperiodic.

Action & Uses in Ayurveda and Siddha

Tikta-rasam, metha veeryam, lagu, ruksham. In sannipatham, swasam, kasam, raktadosham, trishna sodham, kushtam, jwaram, krimi.

Action & Uses in Unani

Tonic to heart, liver and eyes, resolvent, drying, astringent, liquifying, balgham, cough, scanty urine, melancholia, dropsy, sciatia, skin diseases.

According to G. K. Nair and M. Mohanan, authors of "Medicinal Plants of India," this herb is an excellent drug for:

—intermittent fevers

—skin diseases

—intestinal worms

—bronchial asthma

—burning of the body

—regulating the bowels

An infusion of the herb made in hot water with aromatics like cloves, cinnamon etc. is given in doses of half to one fluid ounce.

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Ayurvedic practitioners often prescribe this infusion in doses of two ounces twice a day before meals as a tonic to check hiccup and vomiting.

Dosage

An infusion of the herb is generally employed. It is also given as tincture.

Its decoction is not recommended.

The root is taken in doses of 5 to 30 grains with honey.

This herb is used as part of many compound remedies.

Safety

This herb may result in high "vayu". Use with extreme caution. Do not take except under the supervision of a qualified professional.

CHITRA

Name: White Leadwort.

Biological Name: Plumbago zeylanica Plumbaginaceae.

Other Names: White Leadwort, Chitrak, Chitra, Agnimatha, Agnisikha, Bilay-chitramula, Ceylonische Bleiwurz, Ceylon leadwort, Chita, Chitaro, Chitawa, Chiti, Chittira, Chittiramulam, Chitrak, Chitraka, Chitramula, Chitra-mulam, Chitruk, Dentelaire de Ceylon, Vellakoduveli, Vellakotuveri.

Description

This herb is found throughout India. It grows wild as a garden plant in East, North and Southern India and Ceylon. Plumbago zeylanica is an allied species and is considered to be a cultivated variety of Plumbago rosea.

Constituents

Root contains an acrid crystalline principle called 'Plumbagin.' Plumbagin is present in all the varieties of plumbago to a maximum of about 0.91%.

Parts Used: Root, root bark, seeds.

Remedies For

Action: Root is said to increase the digestive power and promote appetite. Plumbagin stimulates the central nervous system in small doses, while with larger doses paralysis sets in leading ultimately to death. The blood pressure shows a slight fall.

Plumbagin is a powerful irritant and has well marked antiseptic properties. In small doses, the drug is a sudorific; large doses cause death from respiratory failure. It is suggested that the action is probably due to the direct effect of the drug on the muscles.

Uses

The root of this herb is a powerful acro-narcotic poison. It causes abortion. It will expel fetus, dead or alive. The root of the herb is used in cases of enlarged spleen. This herb is used as part of many ayurvedic compound remedies for rubifacient applications. Root reduced to a paste is applied to abscesses to open them.

A paste made of milk, vinegar, or salt and water may be applied in leprosy and other obstinate skin diseases, unhealthy ulcers, scabies etc.

Ayurvedic doctors recommend the root of this herb for dyspepsia, piles, anasarca, diarrhea, skin diseases etc. A tincture of the root- bark is employed as an antiperiodic.

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Dosage

Paste, powders, pills, tincture.

Safety

CAUTION: DO NOT USE WHEN PREGNANT; USE ONLY IN SMALL DOSES. IT CAN CAUSE ABORTION. TAKEN IN LARGE DOSES, THIS HERB CAN CAUSE PARALYSIS LEADING ULTIMATELY TO DEATH. IT CAN ALSO CAUSE DEATH FROM RESPIRATORY FAILURE. IT IS ALSO A POWERFUL POISON. THIS HERB IS VERY DANGEROUS AND SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN EXCEPT UNDER THE CLOSE SUPERVISION OF A PROFESSIONAL.

CHONDROITIN

A Remedy For

—Osteoarthritis

Although many doctors demand further evidence, there's no longer any question that Chondroitin has provided relief to at least some arthritis sufferers.

It is said to ease joint pain, reduce inflammation, and even repair the damaged cartilage that cushions the joints. Because of its beneficial effect on connective tissue, Chondroitin has also been used to treat torn ligaments and tendons.

And some advocates suggest that it can relieve the pain of gout, cure headaches, relieve respiratory ailments and allergies, hasten wound healing, prevent cancer, improve cardiovascular health, and stave off the effects of aging. For these many additional claims, however, there is still no solid scientific evidence.

What It Is; Why It Works

Chondroitin is a complex carbohydrate found in the connective tissue of all mammals. In the resilient cartilage that pads the joints, Chondroitin acts like a magnet, drawing fluid into the tissues. This fluid plays two important roles: It attracts essential nutrients to the area, and it makes the cartilage spongier and better able to absorb shocks.

Chondroitin also protects healthy cartilage from premature decline by preventing the production of certain enzymes that weaken connective tissue and defeating others that stop nutrients from reaching the cartilage. Many researchers are convinced that Chondroitin strengthens the protein strands that make up connective tissue.

There is also some evidence that, because it contains complex sugar molecules called glycosaminoglycans, it not only can reduce inflammation but can actually rebuild cartilage, especially if the tissue has not been totally destroyed.

Chondroitin seems to play an active role in reducing the pain that often accompanies osteoarthritis; and, in some cases, it may even eliminate the need for surgery. Although Chondroitin often works well on its own, it is most effective when combined with glucosamine sulfate. Advocates caution, however, that although this combination may help some people reduce their need for powerful painkillers such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs), it will not work for everyone. It is also not guaranteed to restore complete mobility.

Avoid If...

Unless your doctor approves, do not give

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any preparation containing Chondroitin to children under 2 years of age.

Special Cautions

Children between the ages of 2 and 6 can usually take as much as 10 grams of Chondroitin per day without side effects.

Although Chondroitin contains sugar molecules, it is considered safe for diabetics.

Possible Drug Interactions

Consult your physician before taking Chondroitin if you are taking an anticoagulant drug such as Coumadin, or if you have a blood clotting disorder. Chondroitin may interfere with the action of prescription and nonprescription drugs, herbal preparations, and nutritional supplements. If you are using any of these preparations, talk to your doctor before taking Chondroitin.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Do not take Chondroitin while pregnant or breastfeeding.

How to Prepare

Chondroitin sulfate capsules and Chondroitin sulfate/glucosamine sulfate combination capsules and tablets can be found in many health food stores or may be ordered by mail.

Typical Dosage

There are no standard dosage guidelines. Some advocates recommend 400 milligrams 3 times a day with meals. Others suggest doses ranging from 250 and 1,600 milligrams a day, depending on body weight.

For those using a combination of Chondroitin sulfate and glucosamine sulfate, a typical dosage recommendation is based on weight:

Less than 120 Pounds: 800 milligrams Chondroitin, 1,000 milligrams glucosamine.

120 to 200 Pounds: 1,200 milligrams Chondroitin, 1,500 milligrams glucosamine.

More than 200 Pounds: 1,600 milligrams Chondroitin, 2,000 milligrams glucosamine.

You may adjust your dosage according to your response. If you are overweight or are taking a water pill (diuretic), you may need a larger dose of each supplement.

CHOTA-CHAND

Name: Sarpa-gandha.

Biological Name: Rauwolfia serpentina, Rauvolfia canescens, Apocynaceae.

Other Names: Sarpa-gandha, Nakuli, Chota-chand, Kanakachandrika.

Description

Climbing shrub in India, Sri. Lanka, Java, Malay, etc..

Parts Used: Root.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Action

Bitter tonic, febrifuge, sedative

Uses

—dysentery

— fevers

— high blood pressure

— hypochondria

— insanity

— insect stings

— insomnia

— painful bowel disorders

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Dosage

Decoction, powder, pills.

Safety

Lethal in large doses; Not allowed in the U.S.

Prolonged use over 10 years can cause sterility.

DANGEROUS HERB. DO NOT USE.

CHOTA-GOKHRU

Name: Small Caltrops.

Biological Name: Tribulus terrestris, Tribulus lanuginosus, Tribulus aeylanicus Zygophyllaceae.

Other Names: Small Caltrops, Goats head, Puncture Vine, Chota-gokhru, Gokshura, Gokuuru, Ikshuragandha, Nerinjil, Njeringil.

Description:

This Ayurvedic herb is a trailing plant common in sandy soil throughout India, and Sri Lanka.

Parts Used: Fruit.

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES

Action

Analgesic, aphrodisiac, diuretic, lithotriptic, nervine, rejuvenative, tonic.

Uses

This herb is used in the treatment of urinary disorders and impotence, Kidney diseases and gravel, diseases of the genito-urinary system, calculus affections, gout etc. It is also useful for uterine disorders, diseases of the heart, and many other conditions.

Ayurveda practitioners consider this herb to be very valuable in improving vitality. It revitalizes the emaciated human system. It strengthens the postpartum woman. It is being studied as a potential herbal remedy against AIDS.

Dosage

Decoction, powder.

Safety

Do not use if dehydrated. No other information available.

CHOTI KATHERI

Name: Kantkari.

Biological Name: Solanum xanthocarpum Solanaceae.

Other Names: Choti Katheri, Kantkari Kantakari, Kateli.

Description

This herb is found throughout India.

Parts Used: Stems, roots, flowers, fruit.

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES

Action

Herb: Alterative, anthelmintic, aperient, astringent, bitter, digestive, diuretic, expectorant, stomachic Stems, fruits, flowers-bitter, carminative.

Root: Diuretic, expectorant, febrifuge, anodyne.

Uses

The whole herb is useful for the treatment of fevers, coughs, asthma, flatulence, dropsy, heart disease, pain the chest and gonorrhea.

The roots from this herb (in the form of decoction of confection) are frequently recommended for coughs, dysuria, stone in the bladder, dropsy, asthma, catarrhal fever,

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pain in the chest. It is also useful for the enlargement of the liver and spleen.

This herb is one of the dashamul roots (ten roots) in ayurveda. So, it is one of the important herbs in Indian Medicine.

Dosage

—Decotion, powder, juice, fumes

—Decoction of herb - 0.5 to 2 oz

—Juice of herb - 0.5 to 2 drachms

Safety

No information about the safety of this herb is available.

USE CAUTION: AYURVEDIC HERBS ARE OFTEN TAKEN IN COMBINATION TO NEUTRALIZE THE TOXICITY ONE HERB WITH THE OPPOSING EFFECT OF OTHER. DO NOT TAKE EXCEPT UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL.

Chrysanthemum Flowers

Name: Chrysanthemum flowers.

Biological Name: Chrysanthemum morifolium Compositae.

Other Names: Chrysanthemum flowers, Ju Hua.

Parts Used: Flower.

Remedies For

Anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, antihypertensive. Clears heat, disperses wind, soothes the liver, improves vision. Used for the common cold, fevers, headaches, conjunctivitis, reddening of the eyes, and some cases of deafness. This herb is excellent for fevers with headache and for counteracting the effects of hot climate. While this is a surface-relieving herb, it also has some yin-nourishing properties. The white chrysanthemum flower is used to relieve hypertension, pacify the liver, expel wind, and clear eyesight. The yellow chrysanthemum flower is more effective for wind-heat syndrome with symptoms of fever and sore throat.

Dosage

5–12 grams.

Safety

Those who are weak or have diarrhea should not use chrysanthemum flower.

Chuan Bei Mu

Name: Fritillaria.

Biological Name: Fritillariae cirrhosae Liliaceac.

Other Names: Fritillaria, chuan bei mu.

Parts Used: Bulb.

Remedies For

Antitussive, alternative, expectorant, demulcent Clears phlegm heat; good for many kinds of coughs, especially chronic cough and those caused by in deficiency, in which there may be difficulty expectorating or unproductive coughs with patterns of constrained qi. This herb can be used internally and externally for swollen glands and other nodular swellings and abscesses in the lungs or breasts.

Dosage

3–9 grams; 1–2 grams when taken as a powder.

Safety

Fritillaria is ineffective for coughs caused by cold dampness.

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CAUTION: THE RAW UNPROCESSED HERB IS TOXIC AND SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN INTERNALLY.

Ci Wu Ju

Name: Eleuthero.

Biological Name: Eleutherococcus senticosus, Acanthopanox senticosus Araliaceae.

Other Names: Siberian ginseng, ci wu ju, Eleuthero, touch-me-not, devil's shrub

Parts Used: Root and rhizomes.

Active Compounds

The constituents in eleuthero that have received the most attention are the eleutherosides. Seven primary eleutherosides have been identified, with most of the research attention focusing on eleutherosides B and E. Eleuthero also contains complex polysaccharides (a kind of sugar molecule). These constituents play a critical role in eleuthero's ability to support immune function.

As an adaptogen, eleuthero helps the body adapt to stress. It does this by encouraging normal functioning of the adrenal glands, allowing them to function optimally when challenged by stress.

Eleuthero has been shown to enhance mental acuity and physical endurance without the letdown that comes with caffeinated products.

Research has shown that eleuthero improves the use of oxygen by the exercising muscle. This means that a person is able to maintain aerobic exercise longer and recovery from workouts is much quicker. Another way that eleuthero reduces stress on the body is to combat harmful toxins. Eleuthero has shown a protective effect in animal studies against chemicals such as ethanol, sodium barbital, tetanus toxoid, and chemotherapeutic agents. Eleuthero also reduces the side effects of radiation exposure.

Evidence is also mounting that eleuthero enhances and supports the immune response. Eleuthero may be useful as a preventive measure during cold and flu season.

Recent evidence also suggests that eleuthero may prove valuable in the long-term management of various diseases of the immune system, including HIV infection, chronic fatigue syndrome, and autoimmune illnesses such as lupus.

History

Although not as popular as Asian ginseng, eleuthero use dates back 2,000 years, according to Chinese medicine records. Referred to as ci wu ju in Chinese medicine, it was used to prevent respiratory tract infections as well as colds and flu. It was also believed to provide energy and vitality. In Russia, eleuthero was originally used by people in the Siberian Taiga region to increase performance and quality of life and to decrease infections. In more modern times, eleuthero's ability to increase stamina and endurance led Soviet Olympic athletes to use it to enhance their training. Explorers, divers, sailors, and miners used eleuthero to prevent stress-related illness. After the Chernobyl accident, many Russian citizens were given eleuthero to counteract the effects of radiation.

Siberian ginseng had been used traditionally as an immune-enhancing agent. It was

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also employed as an anti-inflammatory, in cardiovascular disease, to restore concentration, memory, and cognition, and as a remedy for stress, depression, fatigue, or complete nervous breakdown.

Remedies For

Useful for:

—Alzheimer's disease

—Athletic performance

—Attention deficit disorder

—Chemotherapy support

—Chronic fatigue syndrome

—Common cold/sore throat

—Diabetes

—Fibromyalgia

—Influenza (flu)

—Stress and fatigue

Siberian ginseng is highly valued as an adaptogen, a substance that normalizes adverse conditions of the body. It is also used as a stimulant. Russians prescribe it for patients undergoing chemotherapy and radiation therapy due to its anti-radiation effect.

Modern studies conducted by Russian scientists show that Siberian ginseng relieves stress, lowers toxicity of some common drugs that tend to produce side effects in humans, increase mental alertness, improve resistance to colds and mild infections, and be beneficial in cases where a person is continuously in contact with environmental stresses.

Siberian ginseng extract was shown to stimulate cellular immunity. It was found to stimulate T-cell production, especially helper cells. Thus Siberian ginseng is touted for numerous immune-related disorders. German scientists have found that this herb may be useful for treatment in the early stages of AIDS. It is found to retard the spread of the virus by a synergistic action of the elevated numbers of both helper and cytotoxic T cells.

Description

Eleuthero is a distant relative of Asian ginseng (Panax ginseng). Also known commonly as touch-me-not and devil's shrub, eleuthero has been most frequently nicknamed Siberian ginseng in this country. Eleuthero is native to the Taiga region of the Far East (south-eastern part of Russia, northern China, Korea, and Japan). The root and the rhizomes (underground stem) are used.

Dosage

Dried, powdered root and rhizomes of 2–3 grams per day can be used. Concentrated solid extract standardized on eleutherosides B and E, 300–400 mg per day, can also be used, as can alcohol-based extracts, 8–10 ml in two to three divided dosages. Historically, eleuthero is taken continuously for six to eight weeks, followed by a one- to two-week break before resuming.

Safety

Reported side effects have been minimal with use of eleuthero.

Mild, transient diarrhea has been reported in a very small number of users. Eleuthero may cause insomnia in some people if taken too close to bed-time. Eleuthero is not recommended for individuals with uncontrolled high blood pressure. It can be used during pregnancy or lactation.

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However, pregnant or lactating women using eleuthero should avoid products that have been adulterated with Panax ginseng or other related species that are contraindicated.

CINNAMON

Name: Cinnamon.

Biological Name: Cinnamomum cassia, Cinnamomum zeylanicum; Cinnamomum saigonicum; Cinnamomum aromaticum; Cinnamomum laurus Lauraceae.

Other Names: Cinnamon, Tvak, Dalchini, Daruchini, Karuva, Vazhana, tamalapatra.

Description

This plant is indigenous to India and Sri Lanka.

Parts Used: Bark.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Actions

Alterative, analgesic, antibacterial, antifungal, antiseptic, anti-rheumatic, antispasmodic, aromatic, astringent, carminative, demulcent, diaphoretic, digestive, diuretic, expectorant, germicide, hemostatic, stimulant, stomachic.

Uses

—backaches
—bronchitis
—colds
—congestion
—diarrhea
—dysentery
—edema
—flu
—gas
—headaches
—hiccup
—indigestion
—liver problems
—menorrhagia
—menstrual pain
—melancholy
—muscle tension
—nausea
—pain of the waist and knees
—palpitations
—toothache
—vomiting

Dosage

Infusion, decoction, powder, oil.

Safety

Caution: Bleeding disorders.

No information about the safety of this herb is available. Use caution. Ayurvedic herbs are often taken in combination with others to neutralize the toxicity one herb with the opposing effect of other. Do not take except under the supervision of a qualified professional.

CINNAMON TWIG

Name: Cinnamon twig.

Biological Name: Ramulus cinnamomum Lauraceae.

Other Names: Cinnamon twig, Gui Zhi.

Parts Used: Twigs and branches.

Remedies For

Diaphoretic, promotes circulation of blood, Induces perspiration, relieves muscle spasms,

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warms, promotes blood and qi circulation.

It is indicated for the common cold and upper-respiratory congestion associated with external deficiency. it is also used for various circulatory disorders, including chest pains, palpitations, numbness, arthritic and rheumatic conditions, stopped menstruation, and abdominal cramps.

Description

Cinnamon twig is one of the most important circulatory herbs in Chinese herbalism. It is in the same family as North American sassafras, and both herbs are good for circulation and promote urination.

Dosage

3–9 grams.

Safety

This herb should not be used for those with wafebrile diseases or those who are showing heat signs. It should be used with caution in women who are pregnant or are bleeding heavily. No other information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

CINQUEFOIL

Name: Five-finger grass.

Biological Name: Potentilla canadensis, Potentilla reptans.

Other Names: Five-finger grass, cinquefoil, finger leaf, five fingers, cinquefoil, European five finger grass.

Parts Used: Root, leaves.

Remedies For

Astringent: Five-finger grass makes a good gargle and mouthwash and a good remedy for diarrhea. The powdered root or bark of the root can be used, as well as the leaves. The root bark has also been recommended for stopping nosebleed and other internal bleeding.

Description

Five-finger grass is a perennial plant found mostly in dry soils in the US and Canada. Its procumbent stem bears petioled leaves palmately divided into five sharp-toothed, obovate to oblanceolate leaflets. Solitary yellow flowers grow on long peduncles from the axils of the leaves from April to August

Dosage

Infusion: Steep 2 or 3 tsp. leaves in 1 cup water. Take 1 cup a day.

Decoction: Boil 1 oz. root bark in 1-1/2 cups of water until 1 cup of liquid remains. Take 1/4 cup, two or three times a day.

Powdered Root: Take 1/4 to 1/2 tsp. at a time

Tincture: A dose is from 20 to 40 drops

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

CINQUEFOIL

Name: Silverweed.

Biological Name: Potentilla anserina.

Other Names: Cinquefoil, Silverweed, crampweed, goosegrass, goose tansy, moor grass, silver cinquefoil.

Parts Used: The herb.

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Remedies For

Antispasmodic, astringent.

Silverweed tea (made with water or milk) is an excellent remedy for diarrhea and is said to be good for dysentery. As an antispasmodic, it can also be used to relieve cramps; but it is generally mixed with balm leaves and German chamomile flowers to make a tea for that purpose. The tea is also useful as an external astringent for skin problems, mouth and throat sores, and similar complaints.

Description

Silverweed is a low perennial plant, varieties of which are found in dry fields, meadows, and pastures and also in marshy places all over North America and Europe. Its rootstock sends out slender, rooting runners and also produces a rosette of basal, pinnate leaves consisting of 13 to 21 oblong, serrate leaflets that are dark green on top and covered with silvery hairs beneath. The bright-yellow flowers grow singly on long peduncles from May to September.

Dosage

Decoction: Boil 2 tsp. herb in 1 cup water or milk.

Mixed Tea: Mix equal parts of silverweed, balm leaves, and German chamomile flowers. Steep 1 tsp. of the mixture in 1/2 cup water. Sweeten with honey. Take 1 to 1-1/2 cups a day, a mouthful at a time.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Cleaver Grass

Name: Red Clover.

Biological Name: Trifolium pratense Papilionaceae.

Other Names: Red Clover, wild clover, cleaver grass, marl grass, cow grass, trefoil, purple clover.

Parts Used: Flowerheads.

Active Compounds

—Isoflavones; biochanin A, daidzein, formononnetin, genistein, pratensein, trifoside

—Other flavonoids including pectolinarin and trifoliin (=isoquercitrin)

—Volatile oil, containing furfural

Clovamides; L-Dopa-caffeic acid conjugates

—Coumarins; coumestrol, medicagol and coumarin

—Miscellaneous; a galactomannan, resins, minerals vitamins, phytoalexins

Remedies For

Alterative, expectorant, anti-spasmodic, mild stimulant, depuative, detergent.

Red Clover is one of the most useful remedies for children with skin problems. It may be used with complete safety in any case of childhood eczema. Useful for the treatment of other chronic skin conditions such as psoriasis.

Whilst being most useful with children it can also be of value for adults. The expectorant and anti-spasmodic action give this remedy a role in the treatment of coughs and bronchitis, but especially in whooping cough. Jethro Kloss calls red clover as "one of God's greatest blessings to man". It

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purifies blood, it also can be used for treating cancerous growths, leprosy and pellagra in combination with blue violet, burdock, yellow dock, dandelion root, rock rose, and goldenseal. Used alone it is believed to be good for cancer of the stomach, whooping cough, and for various spasms.

Combinations: For skin problems it combines well with Yellow Dock and Nettles.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–3 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 2–6 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Clematis Root

Name: Clematis root.

Biological Name: Clematidis chinensis Ranunculaceae.

Other Names: Clematis root, Wei ling xian

Parts Used: Root.

Remedies For

Antirheumatic, analgesic, antidiuretic, antibacterial.

Lowers blood sugar, Relieves rheumatic aches and pains, numbness, and motor impairment; opens the circulation of qi through the channels and acupuncture meridians.

One interesting application of this herb is in the removal of fish bones stuck in the throat.

Dosage

3–12 grams.

Safety

Clematis root should not be used by those with deficiency of either qi or blood.

Club Moss

Latin Name: Lycopodium clavatum.

Other Names: Stag's Horn, Witch Meal, Wolf's Claw, Vegetable Sulfur.

A Remedy For

Club Moss was used in folk medicine as a treatment for digestive, bladder, kidney, and menstrual complaints, and for disorders that arise from excess uric acid. It was also used for inflammation of the skin and mucous membranes, for joint pain and sore throat, and as a remedy for enlarged prostate and impotence.

Although Club Moss was documented in official medical literature as recently as the mid-twentieth century, its value has not been verified in human studies. It is seldom used today by Western herbalists, except in a highly diluted homeopathic form.

Homeopathic practitioners recommend Club Moss (referred to as Lycopodium) for a host of complaints, mainly urinary, digestive, and dermatological, and for symptom patterns in which the person is pale and feels weak, dry, and cold. Lycopodium is particularly favored when these disease patterns are accompanied by states of emotional sensitivity and a desire for company.

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However, like its folk uses, the herb's homeopathic applications have not been verified by clinical trials. (Homeopathic medicines typically contain mere traces of the active ingredient, and are unlikely to produce any physical effect.)

What It Is; Why It Works

Although this species of Club Moss grows worldwide, it is harvested for its medicinal use mainly in Europe. It is an evergreen plant that grows close to the ground and has few roots. Club Moss is valued medicinally for the spores, which are collected in late summer by shaking them loose from the cone shaped flower. The raw spores, which are odorless and water resistant, were sometimes used to treat wounds and skin conditions, or as a dusting agent in medical and pharmaceutical products.

Undiluted Club Moss has a diuretic effect. The spores contain flavonoids, which are strong antioxidants, as well as a number of other ingredients that may prove beneficial after further study.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Club Moss.

Special Cautions

At customary dosage levels, Club Moss poses no known risks.

Possible Drug Interactions

There are no known interactions with Club Moss.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Homeopathic preparations of Club Moss (Lycopodium) are available commercially at health food stores and some pharmacies. Typical potency ratings range from 6C to 200C (one part in a trillion—or less).

Typical Dosage

Use homeopathic Club Moss (Lycopodium) according to package instructions.

Cobra's Saffron

Name: Cobra's Saffron.

Biological Name: Mesua ferrea, Mesua Roxburghii, Mesua coromandalina Clusiaceae.

Other Names: Cobra's Saffron, Nagakesara, Nagkeshar Cobra Saffron, Nagachempakam, Nagakesara, Nangu.

Description

This herb is found in India.

Parts Used: Flower buds, flowers, fruit, seed, root, bark, oil.

MEDICINAL APPLICATIONS

Actions

—Bark-aromatic, sudorific, tonic

—Oleo-resin from bark: aromatic, demulcent

—Blossoms (fresh) -stomachic, bitter, aromatic, sudorific

—Blossoms (dried) -stomachic, stimulant, carminative

—Root-aromatic, sudorific, tonic

—Unripe fruit - aromatic, acrid, purgative

Uses

The leaves are applied to the head in the form

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of a poultice for severe colds. Oil from the seeds is used for sores, scabies, wounds, and rheumatism. The root of this herb is often used as an antidote for snake poison.

The dried flowers are used for bleeding hemorrhoids and dysentery with mucus. Fresh flowers are also prescribed for excessive thirst, excessive perspiration, cough, and for indigestion.

Safety

No information about the safety of this herb is available.

USE CAUTION: AYURVEDIC HERBS ARE OFTEN TAKEN IN COMBINATION TO NEUTRALIZE THE TOXICITY ONE HERB WITH THE OPPOSING EFFECT OF OTHER. DO NOT TAKE EXCEPT UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL.

Cocash Weed

Name: Life Root.

Biological Name: Senecio aureus, Compositae.

Other Names: Life Root, Squaw Weed, Golden Sececio, ragwort, uncum root, waw weed, uncum, false valerian, cough weed, female regulator, cocash weed, ragweed, staggerwort, St. James wort.

Parts Used: Dried aerial parts. Never use the fresh plant.

Active Compounds

Pyrrolizidinealkaloids; florosenine, otosenine, floridanine. Eremophilane sesquiterpenes, such as trans-9-oxofuranoeremophilane-8x-ethoxy-l0x-H-eremophilane, caccalol.

Remedies For

Uterine tonic, diuretic, expectorant, anti-inflammatory, emmenagogue, diaphoretic, febrifuge, pectoral. As a uterine tonic, Life Root may be used safely wherever strengthening and aid are called for. Useful for menopausal disturbances of any kind. Also useful for delayed or suppressed menstruation. For leucorrhoea it can be used as a douche. It has a reputation as a general tonic for debilitated states and conditions such as tuberculosis.

Combinations: For menopausal problems Life root may usefully be combined with St. Johns Wort, Oats or Pasque Flower.

Description

Found in Europe and N. America.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–3 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: 1-4 ml of the tincture 3 times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Cocoa

Latin Name: Theobroma cacao.

Other Names: Cacao, Chocolate.

A Remedy For

Cocoa is sometimes recommended for diarrhea, urinary tract infections, and liver and gallbladder disorders. However, there's

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little evidence of its effectiveness for these problems. Other unverified uses include diabetes and intestinal infections.

What It Is; Why It Works

It could have been a dream come true: The main ingredient in chocolate revealed as a medical necessity! Unfortunately, Cocoa's medicinal effects are actually quite limited. It does contain compounds that expand airway passages, dilate blood vessels, flush excess water from the body, strengthen the heartbeat, and relax the muscles. However, the amounts are too small for any practical effect. Appropriately, the Latin name for Cocoa means "food of the gods." The more familiar "chocolate" is a corruption of the Mexican word for pounded Cocoa beans. The source of Cocoa, a small tree some 13 to 20 feet in height, is cultivated in tropical regions around the world.

Avoid If...

If you suffer from migraine, it's best to avoid chocolate. It carries compounds that can trigger attacks. Avoid it, too, if it sparks an allergic reaction.

Special Cautions

Cocoa contains significant amounts of caffeine, so overindulgence in chocolate products can lead to overexcitability, a racing pulse, and sleep disorders. In large amounts, Cocoa can also cause constipation.

Possible Drug Interactions

No drug interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Commercial food products abound.

Typical Dosage

Given Cocoa's lack of significant therapeutic effect, the best course is to seek an alternative.

Coenzyme Q10

A Remedy For

Weak heart.

Like all heart medications, Coenzyme Q10 is not a cure. However, for some people suffering from congestive heart failure, irregular heartbeat, or angina, it may ease symptoms and improve cardiac function. Some doctors also recommend it after heart surgery to speed recovery with a minimum of permanent damage.

Some advocates contend that Coenzyme Q10 can stave off hardening of the arteries by discouraging the build-up of plaque on artery walls. Others suggest that it can boost the immune system, helping to prevent the spread of cancer. It has also been recommended for a host of additional disorders ranging from high blood pressure, diabetes, allergies, and fatigue to Alzheimer's disease, Bell's palsy, Huntington's disease, Ménière's disease, muscular dystrophy, and deterioration of the retina. However, its effectiveness for all such conditions has yet to be scientifically verified.

What It Is; Why It Works

Found in every cell in the body, Coenzyme Q10 plays a vital role in the production of energy, triggering the conversion of nutrients into a "fuel" for the cells to burn. This substance,

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called adenosine triphosphate (ATP), can't be stored in quantities sufficient to sustain optimum bodily functions for more than a few minutes. Stores must be continually renewed, making an ample supply of Coenzyme Q10 mandatory.

Adequate levels of the enzyme are particularly crucial for the heart because it's constantly in motion, burning twice as much energy as the other organs. If supplies of the enzyme decline, the action of the heart muscle will tend to weaken, reducing the amount of fresh blood the heart can pump out to the body.

It is for this reason that some researchers regard a deficiency of the enzyme as an aggravating factor in conditions such as congestive heart failure. Good dietary sources of Coenzyme Q10 include beef, pork, and lamb; certain types of fish and shellfish; vegetables such as broccoli and spinach; and vegetable oils.

If you have a heart condition, however, you may want to consider a commercial supplement.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Coenzyme Q10.

Special Cautions

By itself, Coenzyme Q10 is not a sufficient treatment for any type of heart disease. It is generally employed as a supplement, rather than a replacement, for standard medical therapy. Do not attempt to substitute it for any of your regular prescriptions.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Do not use Coenzyme Q10 while pregnant or breastfeeding.

How to Prepare

Coenzyme Q10 is available in capsule, tablet, softgel (gel cap), and chewable form. To improve its absorption, take it with some type of oil (olive oil is recommended) or fat (peanut butter, for example). It is also best to take your dosage with meals.

Store in a dry and cool place, away from light. Do not allow to freeze.

Typical Dosage

Dosage recommendations range from 30 milligrams to 400 milligrams daily, generally increasing with the severity of the problem. Large daily doses are typically divided into 2 or 3 smaller doses (for example, one 60 milligram tablet taken 2 times a day instead of a single 120 milligram tablet taken once).

If you are taking the enzyme for a heart condition, it may be 2 to 8 weeks before you notice any benefit, and you will need to continue taking the product to maintain any improvement.

Overdosage

Since Coenzyme Q10 is not toxic, experts say you may take large amounts without danger.

COFFEE CHARCOAL

Latin Name: Coffea arabica.

A Remedy For

—Diarrhea

—Sore throat

When roasted until burnt and blackened,

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then ground to a powder, coffee beans turn out to be an effective remedy for diarrhea and mild cases of sore throat.

Coffee prepared in the ordinary way fights physical and mental fatigue and is sometimes recommended for migraine headache. Homeopathy, under the theory of "like cures like," uses coffee as a remedy for nervousness and nerve pain.

What It Is; Why It Works

Caffeine, the active ingredient in coffee, is used to boost the action of a variety of prescription and over-the-counter painkillers, including Excedrin, Vanquish, Fiorinal, Fioricet, Esgic, Wigraine, and BC Powder. Caffeine has numerous physiological effects, serving to flush water out of the body, increase production of digestive juices, and stimulate the brain and nervous system.

It also relaxes the walls of the blood vessels (except for vessels in the brain) and the airways in the lungs, while increasing the force of muscular contractions and, in higher concentrations, increasing the heart rate. In people who don't drink coffee, a single cup will cause a notable increase in blood pressure. (Regular coffee drinkers become immune to this effect.)

Caffeine begins to exert its stimulating effects within minutes, reaching maximum concentration in the blood between 15 and 45 minutes after it's taken.

Significant amounts remain in the blood for 4 to 6 hours. Medicinal Coffee Charcoal does not, however, depend on caffeine for its effect. Instead, its therapeutic value lies in its ability to absorb liquid and dry out the tissues.

Coffee is believed to have originated in Ethiopia. (The name "coffee" is derived from Caffa, a region of Ethiopia.) It was introduced into Arab countries in the early 15th century, but did not reach Europe until the 16th century, appearing first in Constantinople, then spreading westward. London's first coffeehouse opened in 1652.

Avoid If...

Take caffeine with caution if you have a heart condition, kidney disease, an overactive thyroid, a disposition to convulsions, or a tendency to anxiety or panic attacks.

Special Cautions

Coffee Charcoal, when taken at customary dosage levels, has no side effects. Coffee in beverage form is a different matter.

It can cause acid stomach, stomach irritation, diarrhea, and poor appetite; and sustained intake can lead to physical dependence. Withdrawal symptoms include headache and sleeping disorders. Drinking large amounts of steeped coffee over an extended period can also lead to a significant increase in levels of total and LDL ("bad") cholesterol. However, use of coffee filters largely eliminates this problem.

Possible Drug Interactions

Coffee Charcoal can interfere with the ability of the body to absorb medicines.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Many doctors recommend limiting coffee intake during pregnancy to 1 cup a day. There is some evidence that drinking 4 or more cups per day may slow the baby's development. Caffeine may also increase

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the risk of late first or second trimester miscarriage.

Caffeine intake while breastfeeding can cause sleep disorders in the nursing infant.

How to Prepare

Coffee Charcoal is taken in powder form.

Typical Dosage

The average individual dose of Coffee Charcoal is 3 grams (a heaping half-teaspoonful). Total intake per day should be 9 grams.

Store in a well-sealed container.

Overdosage

Sustained intake of 1,500 milligrams of caffeine daily (the equivalent of 15 cups of coffee) can lead to restlessness, irritability, sleeplessness, palpitations, dizziness, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite, and headache. Higher doses lead to stiffness, muscle spasms, and rapid, irregular heartbeat. The first signs of outright poisoning are vomiting and abdominal spasms. A lethal overdose is unlikely; it would be the equivalent of about 75 cups of coffee.

Coix

Name: Coix.

Biological Name: Coicis lachryma-jobi Gramineae.

Other Names: Coix, job's tears, yi yi ren.

Parts Used: Seed.

Remedies For

Diuretic, antirheumatic, antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory, antidiarrheal. Drains dampness, clears heat, eliminates pus, tonifies the spleen. This herb is added to medicinal formulas to regulate fluid retention and counteract inflammation. It is very good for all conditions and diseases associated with edema and inflammation, including pus, diarrhea, phlegm, edema or abscesses of either the lungs or the intestines, and rheumatic and arthritic conditions.

Dosage

9–30 grams.

Combinations

For edema, blood in the urine, diarrhea, or dysentery, combine 20 grams of coix, 9 grams of alisma, 9 grams of poria, and 9 grams of atractylodes. For rheumatic and arthritic conditions, combine 30 grams of coix and cinnamon-twig tea cooked with rice to make a porridge.

Safety

Coix should not be used by pregnant women.

Cola

Name: Kola.

Biological Name: Cola vera Sterculiaceae.

Other Names: Kola, Cola, Guru Nut.

Parts Used: Seed kernel.

Active Compounds

Caffeine, with traces of theobromine Tannins and phenolics; d-catechin, l-epicatechin, kolatin, kolatein, kolanin and in the fresh nut, catechol and (-) epicatechol.

Miscellaneous: Phlobaphene, an anthocyanin pigment known as kola red, betaine, protein, starch.

Remedies For

Stimulant to central nervous system, anti-depressive, astringent, diuretic.

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Kola has a marked stimulating effect on the human consciousness. It can be used wherever there is a need for direct stimulation, which is less often than is usually thought. Through regaining proper health and therefore right functioning, the nervous system does not need such help. In the short term it may be used in nervous debility, in states of atony and weakness.

It can act as a specific in nervous diarrhoea. It will aid in states of depression and may, in some people, give rise to euphoric states. In some varieties of migraine it can help greatly. Through the stimulation it will be a valuable part of the treatment for anorexia.

It can be viewed as specific in cases of depression associated with weakness and debility.

Combinations: Kola will go well with Oats, Damiana, and Skullcap.

Description

Native to W. Africa, this herb is cultivated extensively in the tropics. particularly Nigeria, Brazil, Sri Lanka. Indonesia and S. America.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the powdered nuts in a cup of water, bring to boiling and simmer gently for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk when needed.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Cola Nut

Latin Name: Cola acuminata.

Other Names: Bissy Nut, Gurru Nut, Kola Tree.

A Remedy For

—Fatigue

In addition to its role as a remedy for mental and physical fatigue, Cola Nut is chewed to suppress hunger, thirst, morning sickness, and migraine, and is ground into compresses for wounds and inflammation.

What It Is; Why It Works

The source of Cola Nut's energizing effect is none other than common caffeine, which also tends to stimulate the digestive system, speed up the heart, and flush excess fluid from the body.

The nut also contains a minute, medicinally useless amount of the asthma drug theophylline.

A native of tropical Africa, the Cola tree is an evergreen that grows to a height of 50 to 65 feet. In its homeland, its nuts are used as a condiment and an aid to digestion.

Avoid If...

Because Cola Nut stimulates production of digestive acids, avoid its use if you have a stomach or duodenal ulcer. Also, avoid giving large quantities of Cola drinks to children.

Special Cautions

Side effects are similar to those from coffee: difficulty falling asleep, excitability, restlessness, and stomach complaints.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

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Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Cola Nut is available as a dry extract, a fluid extract, an alcohol solution (tincture), and a wine.

Typical Dosage

The customary daily doses are:

Cola Nut: 2 to 6 grams

Cola Extract: 250 to 750 milligrams

Cola Liquid extract: 2.5 to 7.5 grams (about one-half to 11/2 teaspoonfuls)

Cola Tincture: 10 to 30 grams (about 2 to 6 teaspoonfuls)

Cola Wine: 60 to 180 grams (about 1/4 to 3/4 of a cup)

Because the strength of commercial preparations may vary, follow the manufacturer's instructions whenever available.

Store Cola Nut in sealed containers protected from light.

Overdosage

An overdose of Cola tea or drinks large enough to be dangerous is highly unlikely.

COLLARD

Name: Skunk Cabbage.

Biological Name: Symplocarpus foetidus Araceae.

Other Names: Skunk Cabbage, Skunkweed, meadow cabbage, collard, stinking poke, fetid hellebore, polecat weed, swamp cabbage.

Parts Used: Root and rhizome.

Active Compounds

—Essential oil

—5-hydroxytryptamine

—Resins

Remedies For

Anti-spasmodic, diaphoretic, expectorant, sudorific, pectoral, stimulant.

Skunk Cabbage may be used for the treatment of tense or spasmodic condition in the lungs. Relaxes and eases irritable coughs. It may be used in asthma, bronchitis and whooping cough. As a diaphoretic it aids the body during fevers.

Jethro Kloss suggests the following applications for this herb: tuberculosis, chronic catarrh, all bronchial and lung infections, whooping cough, spasmodic asthma, hay fever, pleurisy, chronic rheumatism, nervous troubles, dysentery, spasms, convulsions, dropsy, hysteria, epilepsy, and to relieve pain of external tumors and sores when applied as an ointment.

Combinations: For the treatment of asthmatic conditions it may be used with Grindelia, Pill-bearing Spurge and Lobelia.

Dosage

Traditionally Skunk Cabbage has been used as a powder to 8 parts honey. Of this, 1/2–1 teaspoonful would be taken three times a day. To make a tea, use 1/2 teaspoonful of the herb and make it into either an infusion or a decoction.

Tincture: Take 1/2–1 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are

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known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Common Buckthorn

Name: Common Buckthorn.

Biological Name: Rhamnus cathartica Rhamnaceae.

Other Names: Common buckthorn, purging buckthorn, waythorn.

Parts Used: Fruit.

Active Compounds: Anthraquinones.

History

Buckthorn is a potent laxative. It is so powerful that it is to be taken only as a last resort. Buckthorn became popular for herbal healing in England around the 13th century. Buckthorn was found to produce quick, reliable, dramatic results when used as a laxative. Herbalists, through the ages, have also recommended buckthorn for jaundice, hemorrhoids, gout, arthritis, and menstruation promotion. It was also used for cancer treatment; although this application is controversial.

Remedies For

Diuretic, purgative.

The dried, ripe berries of the common buckthorn have been used as a purgative since the 9th century. The dried berries can be eaten or an infusion made from them for a purgative effect. Fresh berries can be made into a syrup.

Description

Common buckthorn is a deciduous shrub found in Europe, Asia, and the eastern U.S., often as a hedge plant. In the wild, it may grow 12 feet high or more, in thickets, among hedges, and along the edges of woods. Its branchlets are usually tipped with sharp spines; and its ovate or elliptic, crenate-serrate leaves grow in opposite pairs on the stems and branches.

During May and June, small, greenish or yellowish flowers appear in 2- to 5-flowered axillary clusters. The fruit is a black, fleshy berry-like drupe.

Dosage

Berries: Adults take 1/10 to 2/10 oz. dried berries; children take half as much.

Syrup: Boil fresh berry juice with sugar to get a syrupy consistency.

Adults take 1 to 2 tbsp., children 1/2 tsp. at a time.

Safety

CAUTION: EXCESSIVE DOSES OF THE BERRIES CAN PRODUCE POISONING. USE ONLY AS A LAST RESORT. TAKE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A PHYSICIAN. DO NOT TAKE IF YOU ARE PREGNANT.

Do not use buckthorn more than 2 weeks at a time. Prolonged use may result in lazy bowl syndrome—an inability to move stool without chemical stimulation. Make sure the buckthorn is dried thoroughly. Otherwise it may cause vomiting, severe abdominal pain, and violent diarrhea. Many herbalists recommend drying the berries 1 to 2 years before using. If violent diarrhea occurs or if intestinal cramps develop, stop using the herb immediately and see a doctor immediately.

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Common Evening Primrose

Name: Evening Primrose.

Biological Name: Oenothffa bionnis.

Other Names: Evening Primrose, common evening primrose, fever plant, field primrose, king's cureall, night willow-herb, scabish, scurvish, tree primrose, primrose.

Parts Used: The plant.

Active Compounds

Evening primrose oil (EPO), black currant seed oil, and borage oil contain gamma linolenic acid (GLA), a fatty acid that the body converts to a hormone-like substance called prostaglandin E1 (PGE1). PGE1 has anti-inflammatory properties and may also act as a blood thinner and blood vessel dilator.

Linoleic acid, a common fatty acid found in nuts, seeds, and most vegetable oils (including EPO), should theoretically convert to PGE1. But many things can interfere with this conversion, including disease, the aging process, saturated fat, hydrogenated oils, blood sugar problems, and inadequate vitamin C, magnesium, zinc, and B vitamins. Supplements that provide GLA circumvent these conversion problems, leading to more predictable formation of PGE1.

Those with premenstrual syndrome, diabetes, and eczema can have a metabolic block that interferes with the body's ability to make GLA. Many people in Western societies may be at least partially GLA deficient as a result of aging, glucose intolerance, dietary fat intake, and other problems. Individuals with deficiencies benefit from supplemental GLA intake from evening primrose oil, black currant seed oil, or borage oil.

Remedies For

Astringent, mucilaginous.

Traditionally evening primrose had been used as a soothing remedy for coughs associated with colds. It has also been used for mental depression, its effectiveness perhaps due to a stimulating effect on the liver, spleen, and digestive apparatus. It can also be made into an ointment useful for rashes and other skin irritations. The entire plant is edible.

Evening Primrose Oil is Useful for the Treatment of:

—Atherosclerosis
—Attention Deficit Disorder
—Diabetes
—Eczema
—Fibrocystic Breast Disease
—Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
—Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)
—Raynaud's Disease
—Rheumatoid Arthritis
—Schizophrenia
—High Blood Pressure

Schizophrenia and PMS: Studies have shown that about seven 500 mg. capsules of evening primrose oil daily in conjunction with vitamins B-3, B-6, C and zinc achieve remarkable results in the treatment of schizophrenia or premenstrual syndrome (PMS). PMS symptom severities, especially depression, were relieved a lot more with the oil than with the placebo. Up to six capsules per day appear to give significant therapeutic benefits.

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Blood Pressure: In two separate Canadian studies using animals, the main constituent in evening primrose, gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) and the plant oil (EVO) itself, significantly reduced blood pressure. In the first study, the GLA greatly strengthened the heart's response to chronic stress, while in the second a general lowering of blood pressure was observed. Recommendation was to take about 4 capsules of primrose oil per day for hypertension, along with increased potassium intake (750 mg.).

Relief for Chronic Disorders: South African scientists proposed that coronary artery disease, hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, allergic eczema and other atopic conditions, cancer, premature aging, and chronic inflammatory and auto-immune disorders are related to an imbalance of fatty acids in the body. Deficiencies of GLA and another important fatty acid found in fish oils may result in the metabolic blockage of a key enzyme. They suggested that an oil of evening primrose supplement is one good means of getting around this blockage and possibly preventing and treating many chronic disorders as well. Recommended intake is 2 capsules twice daily, in the morning and again in the mid-afternoon for optimal health.

Description

Evening primrose is a coarse, annual or biennial plant found in dry meadows and waste places and along roadsides east of the Rockies to the Atlantic. The stem is erect, stout, and soft-hairy, with alternate, rough-hairy, lanceolate, taper-pointed leaves about 3 to 6 inches long. The yellow, lemon-scented flowers, 1 to 2–1/2 inches across, open at dusk and grow in spikes from June to October. The fruit is an oblong, hairy capsule.

Dosage

Infusion: Use 1 tsp. of the plant with I cup of water. Take 1 cup a day, a mouthful at a time.

Tincture: Take 5 to 40 drops, as needed.

Researchers often use 3,000-6,000 mg of evening primrose oil per day, which provides approximately 270-360 mg of GLA.

See specific recommendations above.

Safety

Consistent, reproducible problems from taking evening primrose oil have not been reported.

Other nutrients are needed by the body, along with evening primrose oil, to make PGE1. Consequently, some experts suggest that magnesium, zinc, vitamin C, niacin, and vitamin B6 should be taken along with evening primrose oil.

Common Garden Thyme

Name: Thyme.

Biological Name: Thymus vulgaris Labiatae.

Other Names: Thyme, Common Thyme, Garden Thyme, common garden thyme, mother of thyme.

Parts Used: Leaves and flowering tops.

Active Compounds

Volatile oil, of highly variable composition; the major constituent is thymol, with lesser amounts of carvacrol, with 1,8-cineole, borneol, geraniol, linalool, bornyl and linalyl acetate, thymol methyl ether and a-pinene.

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Flavonoids; apigenin, luteolin, thymonin, naringenin and others.

Miscellaneous; labiatic acid, caffeic acid, tannins etc..

Remedies For

Carminative, anti-microbial, anti-spasmodic, expectorant, astringent, anthelmintic, tonic, emmenagogue, resolvent, antiseptic.

With its high content of volatile oil, Thyme makes a good carminative for use in dyspepsia and sluggish digestion. This oil is also a strong antiseptic. Used externally as a lotion for infected wounds, and internally for respiratory and digestive infections. It may be of use as a gargle in laryngitis and tonsillitis, easing sore throats and soothing irritable coughs.

An excellent cough remedy, producing expectoration and reducing unnecessary spasm. It may be used in bronchitis, whooping cough and asthma. As a gentle astringent it has found use in childhood diarrhea and bed wetting.

Combinations: For asthmatic problems it will combine well with Lobelia and Ephedra, adding its anti-microbial effect. For whooping cough use it with Wild Cherry and Sundew.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and let infuse for 10 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 2–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Common Hop

Name: Hops.

Biological Name: Humulus lupulus.

Family: Cannabaceae (Hemp family).

Other Names: Common hop, Hops.

Parts Used: Fruit.

Active Compounds

Hops are high in bitter substances. The two primary bitter principles are known as humulone and lupulone. These bitter principles are thought to be responsible for the appetite stimulating properties of hops. Hops also contain about 1-3% volatile oils.

History

Hops gained acceptance in England as an ingredient in beer and as a medicinal herb in 17th century. American Indians made a sedative from the blossoms, and they also applied heated, dried flowers to relieve toothaches.

Remedies For

—Anxiety

—Insomnia

Anodyne, diuretic, febrifuge, hypnotic, sedative, tonic.

Hops have been shown to have mild sedative properties. Many herbal preparations for insomnia combine hops with more potent sedative herbs, such as valerian.

Hops are most commonly used for their calming effect on the nervous system. Hop tea is recommended for nervous diarrhea, insomnia, and restlessness. It will also help

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to stimulate appetite, dispel flatulence, and relieve intestinal cramps. It can be usefully combined with valerian for coughs and nervous spasmodic conditions.

The cold tea, taken an hour before meals, is particularly good for digestion. Hops also have diuretic properties and can be taken for various problems with water retention and excess uric acid. A hop pillow is a popular method of overcoming insomnia. (Sprinkle hops with alcohol and fill a small bag or pillowcase with them.)

Description

A climbing plant native to Europe, Asia, and North America. Hops are the cone-like, fruiting bodies (strobiles) of the plant and are typically harvested from cultivated female plants. Hops are most commonly used as a flavoring agent in beer.

A perennial vine reaching up to 30 feet long. Opposite leaves commonly have three to five coarsely toothed lobes.

Tiny male flowers (July-August) are greenish yellow; female ones are pale green, and are followed by greenish to greenish pink fruiting cones (called strobiles), which are covered with yellow glands that contain the hop bitters.

Dosage

The dried fruits can be made into a tea by pouring 150 ml of boiling water over 1–2 teaspoons of the fruit. Steep for 10 to 15 minutes before drinking.

Tinctures can be taken in amounts of 1–2 ml two to three times per day. Dried hops in tablet or capsule form can also be taken at a dose of 500–1000 mg 2 to 3 times per day.

Many herbal preparations combine hops with other herbal sedatives such as valerian, passion flower, and scullcap.

Safety

Generally considered safe. There are no known contraindications or potential interactions with other medications.

There are some reports of persons experiencing allergic skin rash after handling the dried flowers. This could have been from pollen sensitivity.

Common Lavender

Name: Lavender.

Biological Name: Lavandula officinalis Labiatae.

Other Names: Lavender, Garden Lavender, spike lavender,c ommon lavender.

Parts Used: Flowers.

Active Compounds

Volatile oil, containing linalyl acetate, with linalool, lavandulyl acetate, borneol, camphor, limonene, cadinene, caryophyllene, 4-butanolide, 5-pentyl-5-pentanolide. Coumarins; Umbelliferone, herniarin, coumarin, dihydrocoumarin.

Miscellaneous: triterpenes *e.g.*, ursolic acid, flavonoids *e.g.*, luteolin.

Remedies For

Carminative, anti-spasmodic, anti-depressant, rubefacient, emmenagogue, hypotensive, stimulant, aromatic, fragrant.

This beautiful herb has many uses, culinary, cosmetic and medicinal. It is an effective herb for headaches, especially when they are related to stress. Lavender can be quite

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effective in the clearing of depression, especially if used in conjunction with other remedies. As a gentle strengthening tonic of the nervous system it is used in states of nervous debility and exhaustion. Use it to soothe and promote natural sleep. Externally the oil may be used as a stimulating liniment to help ease the aches and pains of rheumatism.

Combinations: For depression it will combine well with Rosemary, Kola or Skullcap.

Description: Native to the Mediterranean region.

Dosage

Infusion: to take internally, pour a cup of boiling water onto 1 teaspoonful of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10 minutes. This can be drunk three times a day.

External Use: the oil should not be taken internally but can be inhaled, rubbed on the skin or used in baths.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Common Mugwort

Name: Mugwort.

Biological Name: Artemisia vulgaris Compositae.

Other Names: Mugwort, common mugwort, sailor's tobacco, felon herb.

Parts Used: Leaves or root.

Active Compounds

Volatile oil, containing linlool, 1,8-cineole, b-thujone, borneol, a- and b- pinene, nerol, neryl acetate, linalul acetate, myrcene, vulgarole, a-, b- and g-cadinol, cadinenol, muurolol, spathulenol and others.

—Vulgarin, a sesquiterpene lactone

—Flavonoids; quercitin -3-rhamnoglucoside and 5,3-dihydroxy-3,7,4-trimethoxyflavone

—Coumarin derivatives; 7,8-methylendioxy-9-methoxycoumarin

—Triterpenes such as 3 b-hydroxurs-12-en 27,28-dionic acid, b-amyrin, b-sitosterol

Remedies For

Bitter tonic, stimulant, nervine tonic, emmenagogue, laxative, diaphoretic.

Mugwort can be used wherever a digestive stimulant is called for. It will aid the digestion through the bitter stimulation of the juices whilst also providing a carminative oil. It has a mildly nervine action in aiding depression and easing tension, which appears to be due to the volatile oil, so it is essential that this is not lost in preparation. Mugwort may also be used as an emmenagogue in the aiding of normal menstrual flow.

Combinations: May be used widely where a bitter action is needed.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes in a covered container. This should be drunk three times a day. Mugwort is used as a flavoring in a number of aperitif drinks.

Tincture: Take 1–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

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Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Common Nettle

Name: Nettle.

Biological Name: Urtica dioica, Urticacea.

Other Names: Nettle, Stinging Nettle, common stinging nettle, common nettle.

Parts Used: Aerial parts.

Active Compounds

—Chlorophyll in high yields

—Indoles such as histamine and serotonin

—Acetylcholine

—Vitamin C and other vitamins, protein and dietary fiber.

Remedies For

Astringent, diuretic, tonic, hypotensive, pectoral, styptic, rubefacient.

Nettles strengthen and support the whole body. They are used as a spring tonic and general detoxifying remedy. In some cases of rheumatism and arthritis they can be astoundingly successful.

They are a specific in cases of childhood eczema and beneficial in all the varieties of this condition, especially in nervous eczema. Also useful for nose bleeds or to relieve the symptoms wherever there is hemorrhage in the body, for example in uterine hemorrhage.

Traditional herbalists believed that nettle tea is a great hair tonic and will bring back the natural color of the hair. The leaves are excellent blood purifier.

Combinations: Nettles will combine well with Figwort and Burdock in the treatment of eczema.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–3 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Common Parsley

Name: Parsley.

Biological Name: Petroselinum crispum Umbelliferae.

Other Names: Parsley, garden parsley, rock parsley, common parsley, march.

Parts Used: The tap root, leaves and seeds.

Active Compounds

Volatile oil, containing apiole, myristicin, b-phellandrene, p-mentha-l,3,8-triene, 4-isopropenyl-l-methylbenzene, 2-(p-toluyl)propan-2-ol.

—Coumarins

—Flavonoids

—Phthalides

—Vitamins.

Remedies For

Diuretic, expectorant, emmenagogue,

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carminative, anti-spasmodic, hypotensive, aperient.

The fresh herb is a rich source of vitamin C. Medicinally, Parsley has three main areas of usage. Firstly, it is an effective diuretic, helping the body get rid of excess water. The second area of use is as an emmenagogue stimulating the menstrual process. It is advisable not to use parsley in medicinal dosage during pregnancy as there may be excessive stimulation of the womb. The third use is as a carminative, easing flatulence and the colic pains that may accompany it.

Description

Parsley is native to the Eastern Mediterranean. It is cultivated worldwide.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the leaves or root and let infuse for 5–10 minutes in a closed container. This should be drunk three times a day.

Safety

CAUTION: DO NOT USE DURING PREGNANCY IN MEDICINAL DOSAGE. DO NOT USE PARSLEY IF YOU HAVE A KIDNEY INFECTION.

No other information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Common Plantain

Name: Plantain.

Biological Name: Plantago major Plantaginaceae.

Other Names: Plantain, Greater Plantain, waybread, round-leaved plantain, Englishman's foot, common plantain, ribwort, ripple grass, snake weed.

Parts Used: Leaves or aerial parts.

Active Compounds

Iridoids; aucubin, 3,4-dihydroaucubin, 6-O-b-glucosylaucubin, catalpol.

Flavonoids; apigenin, lutelin, scutellarin, baicalein, nepetin, hispidulin, plantagoside.

Miscellaneous; tannin, oleanolic acid, plant acids such as chlorogenic, neochlorogenic, fumaric, hydroxycinnamic and benzoic acids and their esters.

Remedies For

Vulnerary, expectorant, demulcent, anti-inflammatory, astringent, diuretic, anti-microbial.

Both the Greater Plantain and its close relative Ribwort Plantain have valuable healing properties. It acts as a gentle expectorant whilst also soothing inflamed and sore membranes, making it ideal for coughs and mild bronchitis. Its astringency aids in diarrhea, hemorrhoids and also in cystitis where there is bleeding.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day. Ointment: an ointment can be made that will aid the treatment of hemorrhoids and cuts.

Tincture: Take 2–3 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please

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consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Common Rue

Name: Rue.

Biological Name: Ruta graveolens Rutaceae.

Other Names: Rue, Common rue, garden rue, German rue, herb-of-grace, countryman's treacle, herbygrass, Aruta, Garden Rue, Somalata, Sadab.

Description

Rue is an aromatic perennial plant native to southern Europe and northern Africa and commonly cultivated in Europe and the U.S., sometimes escaping to grow wild locally. The branched, pale green, glabrous stem bears alternate, pinnately decompound, somewhat fleshy leaves with oblong to spatulate leaflets. Small yellow or yellow-green flowers appear from June to August.

History

This is a herb that had been used from time immemorial. It was used by the priests in ancient times. It was a well known herb in Christ's time. Rue is like hyssop as a fine remedy for the "many ills of humanity" according to Jethro Kloss. It is believed to relieve congestion of the uterus, leading a very stimulating and tonic effect. Excellent for suppressed menstruation.

Parts Used: The herb.

Active Compounds

Volatile oil, 2-undecanone (50–90%), 2-haptanol, 2-nonanol, 2-nonanone, limonene, pinene, anisic acid, phenol, guiacol and others.

Flavonoids such as quercitin and rutin.

Coumarins: bergapten, daphnoretin, isoimperatorin, naphthoherniarin, psoralen, pangelin, rutamarin, rutarin, scopoletin and umbelliferone.

Alkaloids: arborinine, g-fagarine, graveoline, graveolinine, kokusaginine, rutacridine. Lignans, in the root; savinin and helioxanthin.

Medicinal Applications

Action

Abortificient, anthelmintic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, carminative, ernmenagogue, irritant, stimulant, stomachic

Uses

The main uses for rue are to relieve gouty and rheumatic pains and to treat nervous heart problems, such as palpitations In women going through menopause. The infusion is also said to be useful in eliminating worms. In European folk medicine, rue serves to relieve gas pains and colic, improve appetite and digestion, and promote the onset of menstruation. Rue can also be made into an ointment for external use against gout, rheumatism, and sciatica. Jethro Kloss recommends the herb for painful menstruation, stomach trouble, cramps in the bowels, nervousness, hysteria, spasms, convulsions, pain in the head, confusion, dizziness, colic and convulsions in children, sciatica, pain in the joints and gout. It is also believed to resist poison. The herb, on distillation, yields a volatile oil that has many medicinal applications. The internal administration of the oil causes abortion in pregnant women.

Combinations: For use in the regulation of periods it will combine well with False

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Unicorn Root and Life Root.

Fresh leaf juice mixed with brandy is useful for paralysis.

Dosage

Infusion: Steep 1 tsp. dried herb in 1/2 cup water. Take 1/2 cup a day.

Cold Extract: Soak 1 tsp. dried herb in 3/4 cup cold water for 10 hours and strain. Take 3/4 cup a day.

Tincture: A dose is from 5 to 20 drops.

Safety

CAUTION: LARGE DOSES OF RUE CAN CAUSE MILD POISONING. CONTACT WITH THE FRESH PLANT MAY CAUSE DERMATITIS IN SENSITIVE PERSONS; THE JUICE IS A LOCAL IRRITANT RUE IS NOT TO BE USED BY PREGNANT WOMEN. DO NOT BOIL RUE OR DO NOT USE IN LARGE QUANTITIES.

CONDURANGO

Name: Condurango.

Biological Name: Marsdenia condurango Asclepiadaceae.

Other Names: Condurango, Eagle vine.

Parts Used: Dried bark.

Active Compounds

Glycosides based on condurangogenins, which are esterified polyoxypregnanes, known as condurangoglycosides.

Miscellaneous: Essential oil, phytosterols, sugars, starch and fat.

Remedies For

Bitter, emmenagogue. This bitter may be used in a whole range of digestive and stomach problems.

It is best known for its appetite-stimulating actions, common to all bitters. However, in addition, it will relax the nerves of the stomach, making it of use in the settling of indigestion where this is affected by nervous tension and anxiety.

Description

This herb is found in Ecuador and Peru.

Dosage

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1–2 teaspoonfuls of the powdered bark and leave to infuse 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 1–2 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Combinations: It will combine well with many bitters, carminatives and nervines depending upon the specific condition and individual.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

CONG BAI

Name: Scallion.

Biological Name: Allii fistulosi Liliaceae.

Other Names: Scallion, Green onion, Cong Bai.

Parts Used: Bulb.

Remedies For

Diaphoretic, diuretic, antimicrobial, stomachic, expectorant.

Dissipates coldness, induces perspiration, dispels dampness, relieves abdominal

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bloating. Can be used when there is coldness or fullness in the stomach or chest area. Very effective in the initial stages of colds and influenza and for congestion of the lungs or sinuses.

Dosage

3–9 grams. It should be added near the end of making the decoction.

Safety

Scallion should not be used when spontaneous sweating is occurring.

Conval Lily

Name: Lily of the Valley.

Biological Name: Convallaria majalis.

Other Names: Lily of the Valley, May lily, may bells, convallaria, conval lily.

Parts Used: Entire plant.

Remedies For

Diuretic, cardiac, tonic, laxative, mucilaginous.

Traditionally described as very quieting to the heart and good for the heart generally. Useful in epilepsy, dizziness, and convulsions of all kinds. Good for palsy and apoplexy. Strengthens the brain and makes the thoughts clearer. Useful for dropsy. Large doses may cause nausea vomiting and diarrhea.

NOT RECOMMENDED - TOXIC

Safety

CAUTION: THIS HERB MAY BE TOXIC OR POISONOUS. IT HAS AN ACTION ON THE HEART SIMILAR TO DIOGITALIS AND SHOULD NOT BE USED WITHOUT PROPER SUPERVISION. NOT RECOMMENDED.

Coptis

Name: Coptis.

Biological Name: Rhizoma coptidis, Coptis chinensis Ranunculaceae.

Other Names: Coptis, Huang Lian.

Parts Used: Rhizome.

Remedies For

Anti-inflammatory, antibiotic, vasodilator, antipyretic, cholagogue.

The anti-inflammatory property of coptis makes it especially effective with heat conditions associated with nervousness, anxiety, and insomnia. It stimulates the flow of bile, relieving damp heat, making it effective for hepatitis, gallstones, cirrhosis, jaundice, and venereal diseases, including herpes simplex. It is also very effective for infections, fevers, conjunctivitis, inflammation, abscesses, and hemorrhage. Useful for oral ulcers. In addition, it can be topically applied for scabies and external infections. It is also useful for more serious diseases, from leukemia and cancer to tuberculosis and typhoid fever.

Description: Chinese herb.

Dosage

1–9 grams.

Safety

CAUTION: COPTIS IS EXTREMELY BITTER. LARGE DOSES CAN INJURE THE STOMACH. DO NOT EXCEED THE DOSE RECOMMENDED.

Corn

Name: Corn Silk.

Biological Name: Zea mays Graminaceae.

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Other Names: Corn Silk, corn, Indian corn, maize jagnog, Turkish corn, yu mi xu.

Parts Used: Stigmas from the female flowers of maize. Fine soft threads 4-8 inches long. (silk).

Active Compounds

—Saponins

—Allantoin

—Sterols, especially b-sitosterol and stigmasterol

—The alkaloid hordenine

Miscellaneous: Vitamins C & K, cryptoxanthin, anthocyanins, plant acids.

Remedies For

Diuretic, demulcent, anti-inflammatory, tonic, anodyne, alterative, lithotriptic.

As a soothing diuretic, Corn Silk is helpful in any irritation of the urinary system. It is used for renal problems in children and as a urinary demulcent combined with other herbs in the treatment of cystitis, urethritis, prostatitis and the like.

Contemporary herbalists recommend corn Silk for the following conditions:

—catarrhal cystitis,

—lithaemia (stones),

—bladder irritation,

—gonorrhoea,

—all catarrhal conditions of the urinary passages,

—dropsies due to heart disease, and edema.

Combinations: Cornsilk may be combined with Couchgrass, Bearberry, Buchu or Yarrow for the treatment of cystitis.

Dosage

The stigmas should be collected just before pollination occurs, the timing depends upon climate. It is best used fresh as some of the activity is lost with time.

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 2 teaspoonfuls of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 3–6 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

CORNFLOWER

Latin Name: Centaurea cyanus.

Other Names: Bachelor's Buttons, Bluebonnet.

A Remedy For

Once used as a remedy for indigestion, fever, and colds, Cornflower has fallen into disfavor, perhaps because its effectiveness has never been demonstrated. Other unproven uses include treatment for menstrual disorders, vaginal yeast infections, water retention, liver and gallbladder complaints, eye inflammation, and eczema.

What It Is; Why It Works

Considered a weed by corn farmers, Cornflower infests fields worldwide. Although ineffective for most purposes, the dried flowers do show antibacterial activity in the laboratory.

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Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Cornflower.

Special Cautions

Cornflower poses a slight possibility of an allergic reaction.

Possible Drug Interactions

There are no known drug interactions.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No information is available.

How to Prepare

The crushed dried flowers can be used to make tea.

Typical Dosage

Use 1 gram of Cornflower per cup of tea. Store away from light.

Overdosage

No information is available.

CORYDALIS

Latin Name: Corydalis yanhusuo.

Other Names: Yan-Hu-Suo.

A Remedy For

Corydalis is one of the chief painkillers in traditional Chinese medicine, where it's favored for relief of arthritis, menstrual cramps, traumatic injuries, and almost all other types of pain. The herb has a mildly sedative and tranquilizing effect, and is sometimes used for mood disorders and emotional disturbances. In the folk medicine of the past, its tendency to reduce spasms won it a place in the treatment of Parkinson's disease.

What It Is; Why It Works

Corydalis grows throughout the world, but the species Corydalis yanhusuo is native to northern China. A floral plant, it is valued medicinally for its fleshy underground root. Researchers are interested in Corydalis because it contains as many as 20 active compounds that may prove useful in human medicine. In Chinese studies, one such compound, THP (tetrahydroprotoberberine), which works on the central nervous system, was found effective in treating insomnia and menstrual and nerve pain, and in relieving post-childbirth abdominal pain. Studies on lab animals suggest that THP's effects on brain chemistry may help in treating other disorders, including epileptic seizures. Lab-animal research indicates that additional compounds found in Corydalis may be effective in the treatment of inflammatory disorders, cataracts, and allergic reactions. It helps keep platelets in the blood from sticking together which could be beneficial in conditions of the circulatory system such as hardening of the arteries, stroke, and heart attack. One test-tube study suggested antiviral effects.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Corydalis.

Special Cautions

Do not take more than the recommended amount of Corydalis, as there is a risk of toxicity from large doses.

Possible Drug Interactions

No drug interactions have been reported. However, it makes sense to use caution when

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taking it with other medications that act on the central nervous system.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Do not take Corydalis if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

How to Prepare

Corydalis is available from suppliers of Asian herbal products in capsules and tablets, and as a liquid extract. Check the ingredients carefully, as Corydalis is frequently combined with other herbs.

Typical Dosage

The typical daily dosage of Corydalis is 5 to 10 grams of the dried powder taken in several small doses. With the capsules, tablets, and liquid extract, dosage recommendations vary widely, so use according to package directions, preferably under the supervision of a qualified practitioner.

Overdosage

Corydalis contains compounds that can be toxic in large doses. Do not take more than the recommended amount.

COSTUS

Name: Costus.

Biological Name: Saussurea lappa.

Other Names: Costus, Kut Root, Kut, Kushtha.

Description

This herb is found in Himalayas and Kashmir Valley.

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES

Action

Alterative, anthelmintic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, aromatic, astringent, carminative, diuretic, expectorant, insecticidal, prophylactic, stimulant, tonic.

Uses

—Bronchial asthma

—cholera

—cough

—dyspepsia

—edema

—gas

—hiccup

—jaundice

—leprosy

—phlegm

—rheumatism

—skin diseases

As an ointment it is applied externally to wounds, severe ulcerations, skin diseases, and tumors.

Dosage

Powder, paste.

Safety

CAUTION: NARCOTIC EFFECTS WHEN SMOKED. USE ONLY UNDER SUPERVISION OF A QUALIFIED PRACTITIONER.

COTTONWEED

Name: Milkweed.

Biological Name: Asclepias syriaca.

Other Names: Milkweed, milkweed root, silkweed, silky swallow wort, cottonweed, Virginia silk.

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Parts Used: Root.

Remedies For

Emetic, purgative, alterative, diuretic, tonic.

Traditionally used for female complaints, bowel and kidney troubles. It increases the flow of urine—useful for dropsy. Also good for asthma, stomach troubles, and scrofulous conditions of the bladder. It is an effective remedy for gallstones.

Safety

CAUTION: CAUTION SHOULD BE EXERCISED IN USING MILKWEED SINCE IT MAY BE POISONOUS, ESPECIALLY WHEN USED IN LARGE DOSES AND PARTICULARLY IN CHILDREN. DO NOT TAKE MORE THAN NECESSARY. NOT RECOMMENDED.

COUCHGRASS

Name: Couchgrass.

Biological Name: Agropyron repens Graminaceae.

Other Names: Couchgrass, Twitchgrass, Quickgrass, Doggrass.

Parts Used: The rhizome.

Active Compounds

—Carbohydrates; triticin, a fructosan polysaccharide, inositol, mannitol & mucilage.

—Volatile oil, mainly of agropyrene

Miscellaneous: vanillin glycoside, vitamins A and some of the B complex, fixed oil, minerals including silica and iron.

Remedies For

Diuretic, demulcent, anti-microbial.

Couchgrass may be used in urinary infections such as cystitis, urethritis and prostatitis. Its demulcent properties soothe irritation and inflammation. It is of value in the treatment of enlarged prostate glands.

It may also be used in kidney stones and gravel. As a tonic diuretic, Couchgrass has been used with other herbs in the treatment of rheumatism. For urinary tract infections, couchgrass may be used with Buchu, Bearberry or Yarrow. It can be combined with Hydrangea for prostrate problems.

Description

Grows in many parts of the world, and all too frequently in gardens.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 2 teaspoonfuls of the cut rhizome in a cup of water, bring to boiling and let simmer for 10 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day.

Tincture: Take 2–4 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

COW BEZOAR

Name: Cow Bezoar.

Biological Name: Calculus bovis Bovidae.

Other Names: Cow bezoar, Niu Huang, Cow gallstone.

Parts Used: Gallstone or the bile of an ox, water buffalo, or pig. It is dried and made into a powder for pills.

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Remedies For

Anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, antibacterial.

It is used for high fever with accompanying delirium and convulsion. It is also used for chronic sore throat or internal abscesses that have ruptured.

Description

This substance is extremely expensive and primarily used in the Chinese patent called Niu Huang Jie Du Pian. The combination of niu huang with rhinoceros or water buffalo horn can be a lifesaver in the treatment of Legionnaire's disease, meningitis, and encephalitis.

Dosage

0.15–0.3 grams.

Safety

Cow Bezoar should not be used by pregnant women or those with spleen and stomach coldness and deficiency.

Cow Cabbage

Name: Wild Pond Lily.

Biological Name: Nymphaea odorata.

Other Names: Wild Pond Lily, white water lily, sweet-scented pond lily, sweet scented water lily, toad lily, pond lily, water lily, cow cabbage, sweet water lily, water cabbage.

Parts Used: Root.

Remedies For

Deobstruent, astringent, vulnerary, discutient, demulcent, antiseptic.

This herb is taken traditionally internally for leukorrhea, diarrhea, bowel complaints, scrofula, mucous troubles, inflamed tissues in various parts of the body and for bronchial troubles. Very effective in dropsy, kidney troubles, catarrh of the bladder, or irritation of the prostate. Excellent for infant bowel troubles.

Dosage

Powder, tea, poultices.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Cramp Bark

Name: Cramp Bark.

Biological Name: Viburnum opulus Caprifoliaceae.

Other Names: Cramp Bark, Guelder Rose.

Parts Used: Dried bark.

Active Compounds

—Hydroquinones; arbutin, methylarbutin and traces of free hydroquinone
—Coumarins, such as scopoletin and scopoline
—Tannins; mainly catechins

Remedies For

Anti-spasmodic, anti-inflammatory, nervine, hypotensive, astringent, emmenagogue.

Cramp Bark has a reputation as a relaxer of muscular tension and spasm. It has two main areas of use. Firstly in muscular cramps and secondly in ovarian and uterine muscle problems. Cramp Bark will relax the uterus and so relieve painful cramps associated with periods (dysmenorrhoea). In a similar way it may be used to protect from threatened miscarriage. Its astringent action gives it a role in the treatment of excessive blood loss

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in periods and especially bleeding associated with the menopause.

Combinations: For the relief of cramp cramp bark may be combined with Prickly Ash and Wild Yam. For uterine and ovarian pains or threatened miscarriage it may be used with Black Haw and Valerian.

Description

Found in Europe, Britain and America.

Dosage

Decoction: Put 2 teaspoonfuls of the dried bark into a cup of water and bring to the boil. Simmer gently for 10–15 minutes. This should be drunk hot three times a day.

Tincture: Take 4–8 ml of the tincture three times a day.

Safety

No information available. Some herbs are known to react with your medication. Please consult your physician before starting on any herb.

Cranberry

Name: Cranberry.

Biological Name: Vaccinium macrocarpon, Oxycoccus quadripetalus Ericaceae.

Other Names: Cranberry.

Parts Used: Juice from the berries.

Active Compounds

Cranberry prevents *E. coli*, the most common cause of Urinary tract infections (UTIs) and recurrent UTIs, from adhering to the cells lining the wall of the bladder. This anti-adherence action renders the bacteria harmless in the urinary tract. The constituents in cranberry responsible for this anti-adherence activity have yet to be identified.

History

Cranberry has been used to prevent kidney stones and "bladder gravel" as well as to remove toxins from the blood. Cranberry has long been recommended for persons with recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs).

Remedies For

Useful for the Treatment of: Urinary tract infection.

Dosage

People often take one capsule or tablet of a concentrated cranberry juice extract two to four times per day. Several glasses (16 ounces total) of a high-quality cranberry juice (not the cocktail) each day can approximate the effect of the cranberry concentrate.

Safety

There are no known side effects with cranberry concentrate, and it is safe for use during pregnancy and lactation. Cranberry should not be used as a substitute for antibiotics during an acute urinary tract infection.

Cranesbill

Latin Name: Geranium maculatum.

Other Names: Alumroot, Crowfoot, Geranium, Storksbill.

A Remedy For

In folk medicine, Cranesbill root is recommended for diarrhea, dysentery, stomach ulcer, hemorrhoids, and heavy menstrual bleeding. However, its effectiveness for these conditions has not yet been verified in formal clinical trials.

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What It Is; Why It Works

Cranesbill is a lovely flowering plant that grows throughout Europe and North America. Cranesbill root has a high tannin content, which probably accounts for its ability to stop bleeding and control diarrhea. The same tannins are found in its leaves, which were at one time dried by Native American tribes and applied externally to wounds and ulcers as a poultice to stop bleeding.

Avoid If...

There are no known medical conditions that preclude the use of Cranesbill.

Special Cautions

The tannins in Cranesbill could cause stomach upset. Cranesbill should not be taken for more than two to three weeks at a time.

Possible Drug Interactions

No interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

No harmful effects are known.

How to Prepare

Cranesbill is prepared commercially in capsules or in tincture form. It is sometimes combined with other herbs; read the label carefully for ingredients.

Typical Dosage

The usual daily dose is 2 to 3 capsules taken 2 times a day with a glass of water, or 2 to 4 milliliters (30 to 60 drops) of tincture 3 times a day diluted in water.

CREATINE

A Remedy For

—Muscular exhaustion.

With promises of enhanced athletic performance, increased energy, a leaner and stronger body, and prolonged physical fitness, the advocates of Creatine have been attracting a lot of attention recently. And in fact, there is some evidence to suggest that Creatine can boost certain kinds of athletic performance. However, the results are mixed and the long-term effects of Creatine supplementation are not known. The only certainty is that Creatine has successfully relieved a few rare disorders of muscle or energy metabolism. If you decide to use Creatine, it would be best to consult with your doctor first.

What It Is; Why It Works

Creatine is an amino acid compound produced by the body, primarily in the liver. Most of our daily supply comes from dietary sources such as milk products and red meats. Creatine is stored in muscle tissue where it is used to quickly produce the energy needed to meet muscle demand. It is essential to muscle contraction and helps in the muscle-building process. At normal activity levels, the daily requirement is about 2 grams. Individuals who engage in strenuous physical activities or who are under physical stress may be deficient in Creatine muscle stores.

Intense physical activity requires a burst of energy. As fuel for this energy, the body uses ATP (adenosine triphosphate), a compound formed when Creatine combines with ADP (adenosine diphosphate). As long as the muscle continues its work, the ATP supply must be replenished with conversion of additional stores of ADP and Creatine. This normal cycle of use and production of ATP stops when the supply of Creatine runs out.

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Depleted ATP stores leave the body feeling fatigued.

If you've ever exercised and had the experience of "hitting the wall," you know what it feels like when ATP is gone. Because the muscles normally store ATP in only small amounts, a sudden surge of high-intensity physical activity creates an immediate demand for Creatine. Advocates suggest that adding large doses of synthetic Creatine can quickly restore ATP levels and enhance physical performance. However, research results are contradictory, and no studies have examined the long term, high-dose use of a synthetic form of the compound.

Since it is not known if supplementing Creatine inhibits the body's own production, Creatine cannot be recommended for extended use. There is also an association between the amount of water in the muscles and how much work they can do. Creatine appears to make the muscles retain water, which increases their work capacity, but could also result in dehydration. Some doctors believe that the increase in muscle mass cited by advocates is simply due to water retention.

Avoid If...

You have a kidney disorder. Creatine supplementation may cause dehydration and the formation of metabolic wastes, which can harm the kidneys.

Special Cautions

Because Creatine draws water to the muscles, you need to drink extra water to prevent dehydration. Some reports suggest you should not mix Creatine with fruit juice because that increases the formation of creatinine, a waste product that is harmful to the kidneys.

Do not take high doses of Creatine for more than a few days. Although some manufacturers may recommend "loading" with Creatine by taking 10 times the daily amount needed for up to a week, after the first few days the body can make use of only 2 grams per day.

Possible Drug Interactions

No drug interactions have been reported.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Do not use Creatine while pregnant or breastfeeding.

How to Prepare

Creatine comes in powder form and should be mixed in a glass with water.

Typical Dosage

Dosage recommendations vary. During Creatine loading, 20 to 30 grams per day are taken in divided doses for up to three days, followed by 2 to 3 grams per day for maintenance. This method increases muscle Creatine levels rapidly, which is believed to better serve short-term energy needs.

For extended training and endurance needs, 3 to 5 grams per day is often recommended. With this dosage, Creatine levels rise gradually.

CUMIN

Latin Name: Cumina cyminum.

A Remedy For

—Indigestion

Although its use is not officially recognized,

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Cumin is considered an effective remedy for indigestion.

It is also taken to relieve gas, diarrhea, and cramps; and in Asian medicine, it is used to induce milk production in breastfeeding mothers, relieve inflammation, and cure worm infestations. Its effectiveness for these other uses has not, however, been scientifically verified.

What It Is; Why It Works

A distinctive spice used in southwestern and Indian cuisine, Cumin is mentioned in the Bible and was used medicinally in Roman times, when ground Cumin was eaten with bread or wine.

Today, Cumin is cultivated throughout the Mediterranean region and in Iran, Pakistan, India, China, the United States, and South America. The seeds and their oil are both used medicinally. Laboratory studies have shown that powdered cumin has anti-infective effects and may inhibit blood clots.

Avoid If...

No known medical conditions preclude the use of Cumin.

Special Cautions

No special precautions are needed.

Possible Drug Interactions

Animal studies suggest that Cumin may prolong the effect of barbiturates such as phenobarbital.

Special Information if you are Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Cumin is used in some cultures to induce abortion, so caution is advisable during pregnancy.

How to Prepare

Cumin can be taken internally or used externally. It can be used in the ground form or as a pressed oil.

Typical Dosage

Strengths of medicinal preparations may vary. Follow the manufacturer's labeling whenever available.

CURCUMA

Name: Turmeric.

Biological Name: Curcuma longa.

Family: Zingiberaceae.

Other Names: Curcuma, turmeric, haldi, haridra, gauri.

Description

A native of India and Indonesia, turmeric is a perennial with a pulpy, orange, tuberous roots that grow to about 2 feet in length. The aerial parts, which reach 3 feet, include large, lily-like leaves, a thick, squat, central flower spike, and funnel-shaped yellow flowers.

Parts Used: Rhizome, tubers.

Active Compounds

The active constituent is known as curcumin. It has been shown to have a wide range of therapeutic effects. First, it protects against free radical damage because it is a strong antioxidant. Second, it reduces inflammation. It accomplishes this by reducing histamine levels and possibly by increasing production of natural cortisone by the adrenal glands. Third, it protects the liver from a number of toxic compounds.

Fourth, it has been shown to reduce platelets from clumping together, which in turn,

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improves circulation and helps protect against atherosclerosis. Numerous studies have also shown cancer-preventing effects of curcumin. This may be due to its powerful antioxidant activity in the body.

History

Turmeric is a very important herb in Indian Ayurvedic medicine. A symbol of prosperity, it was considered a cleansing herb for the whole body. Medically, it was used as a digestive aid and treatment for fever, infections, dysentery, arthritis, and jaundice and other liver problems.

Traditional Chinese physicians used turmeric to treat liver and gallbladder problems, stop bleeding, and treat chest congestion and menstrual discomforts. The ancient Greeks were well aware of turmeric. It had been used to make yellow-orange dyes.

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES

Action

Alterative, antheimintic, antibacterial, antibiotic, aromatic, carminative, stimulant, tonic, vulnerary

Uses

—anemia
—atherosclerosis
—bursitis
—Chron's Disease
—diabetes
—edema
—hemorrhoids
—hepatitis
—hysteria
—indigestion
—inflammation
—inflammatory bowel syndrome
—jaundice
—psoriasis
—Rheumatoid arthritis
—skin disorders
—urinary diseases
—wound and bruise healing

In India, turmeric is used for the treatment of anorexia, liver disorders, cough, diabetic wounds, rheumatism, and sinusitis. It is currently being evaluated for its anticarcinogenic and antimutagenic properties.

Wound Treatment: Sprinkle a bit of turmeric on cuts and scrapes after they have been thoroughly washed. The turmeric, with its antibacterial action, will prevent the bacterial wound infections.

Digestive Aid: Turmeric helps stimulate the flow of bile, which helps digest fats.

Intestinal Parasites: Turmeric fights protozoans in laboratory tests, supporting its traditional use in treating dysentery.

Liver Protection: Curcumin has a protective effect on liver tissue exposed to liver damaging drugs. It had been traditionally used for liver ailments. Consuming alcohol regularly or using the pain killer acetaminophen (Tylenol) tends to increase the risk for liver damage; turmeric may help in minimizing this damage to some extent.

Arthritis: Turmeric's anti-inflammatory action help relieve wound inflammation and in treating arthritis.

Heart Protection: Studies have shown that

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turmeric may help reduce cholesterol. It is also shown to prevent the internal blood clots that trigger heart attack and some strokes.

Others: Recent studies show promising results on the use of turmeric to treat cancer. It is believed to inhibit the growth of lymphoma tumor cells. Another study has shown that turmeric helps prevent tumor development in animals.

Dosage

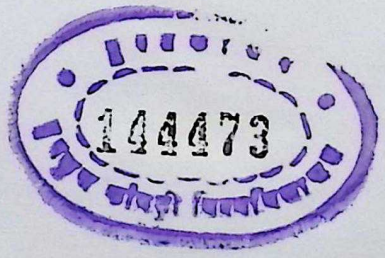
Many people take 400 mg. of turmeric three times per day in capsules or tablets. Turmeric as a spice can also be incorporated into the diet as a way to promote health.

Safety

Turmeric is extremely safe. It has been used in large quantities as a food with no adverse reactions. However, persons with symptoms from gallstones should avoid turmeric.

Turmeric's potential anti-clotting effect might cause problems for those with clotting disorders. Unusually large amount of turmeric consumption may result in stomach upset. Do not take turmeric if you are pregnant, or if you are suffering from acute jaundice or hepatitis.

FDA lists turmeric as a herb that is normally considered safe.



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Teresa Baldwin is a medical herbalist living on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. She has an extensive background in orthomolecular nutrition and allergy therapy as well as clinical aromatherapy. After a year long journey embracing North America, China, Russia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, Teresa became deeply involved in the herbal renaissance that is underway in North America. She currently heads *The School of Herbal Studies*, Canada's respected centre of herbal education and regularly teaches in Canada, USA and New Zealand. She is also the author of *An Encyclopedia of Natural Healing for Children and Infants.*

Vincent Scalzo, a herbalist, botanical researcher, has co-authored several books with Teresa Baldwin including *Herbal Solutions for Healthy Living* and *Traditional Medicines from the Earth.* He also specializes in traditional Chinese medicine and Naturopathy. Vincent has a garden of his own where he cultivates medicinal herbs. An ardent practitioner of Yoga, he maintains and prepares many antique potions of Dr. Culpeper, many of which, he finds, have magical effect on health and well being.

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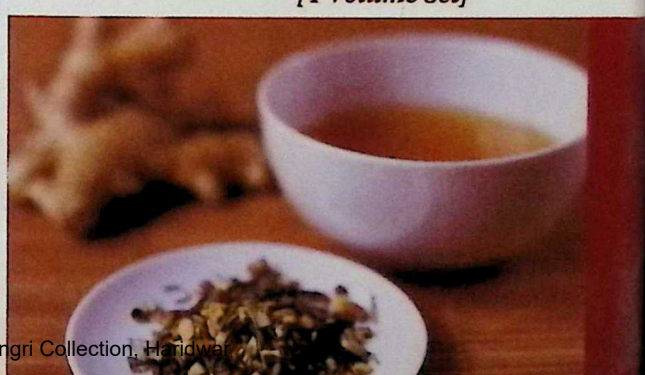

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